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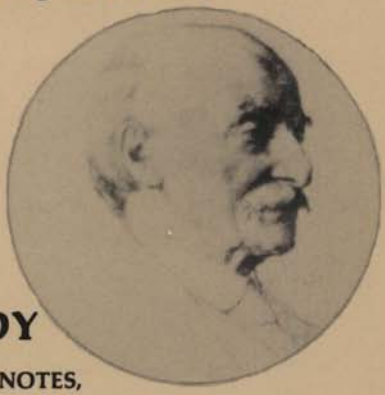

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PR4 1979-VOLUME XLVI NUMBER 4

CONTENTS

NOTES		**500**
ARTICLES		
Joel Kovel **Jacob Arlow** **Steven Marcus**	*Psychoanalysis Today*	**501**
Kingsley Widmer	*In Praise of Waste*	**542**
Norman Birnbaum	*A New Politics for the 80s?*	**559**
M.H. Abrams	*How to Do Things with Texts*	**566**
STORY		
Paul West	*The Basement of Kilimanjaro*	**553**
NEW BLACK POETRY		**589**
Anthony McNeill, Lorenzo Thomas, Wanda Coleman, Jamé-Maçeo Camier, George Pitts		
BOOKS		
Roger Shattuck	*The Proust Screenplay* by Harold Pinter	**611**
Rosalind Krauss	*Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare* by Octavio Paz	**615**
Gary Stephens	*The Feminization of American Culture* by Ann Douglas	**620**
Gunther S. Stent	*The Use and Abuse of Biology: An Anthropological Critique of Sociobiology* by Marshall Sahlins	**623**

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Victor Terras	*A Voice from the Chorus* by Abram Tertz	**630**
Jerry Bumpus	*Sergeant Getúlio* by João Ubaldo Ribeiro	**634**
	Captain Pantoja and the Special Service by Mario Vargas Llosa	
Jack Ludwig	*Delmore Schwartz: The Life of an American Poet* by James Atlas	**636**
Arthur C. Danto	*The Rise of American Philosophy* by Bruce Kuklick	**643**
LETTERS		**647**
INDEX		**652**

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Editor's Notes: In our Volume XLVI, No. 2, 1979 issue, the name of the translator of the poem "Hannah Arendt" was not mentioned. We were not aware that the poem had been translated by **DAVID SCRASE** or that it had appeared in *London Magazine*. Also, Irving Howe's article "George Eliot and the Jews", in our Volume XLVI, No. 3, 1979 issue, is from *Daniel Deronda* by George Eliot with an Introduction by Irving Howe. (Introduction Copyright © 1979 by The New American Library, Inc. The piece was printed by arrangement with The New American Library, Inc., New York, N.Y.)

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PSYCHOANALYSIS TODAY

The following discussion took place in New York. Readers are invited to comment.

William Phillips: I would like to welcome you to one of a series of evenings made possible by a grant from the New York Council for the Humanities. The subject for tonight, as you know, is the state of psychoanalysis and therapy. And I should say that it is no secret that many people think that psychoanalysis has declined in popularity and prestige. One of our aims tonight is to examine whether this is true.

We are also going to try to examine the reasons for the appearance of the many new therapies which are easier, faster, cheaper, more exciting than psychoanalysis. Among the questions which we expect to consider is whether there has been a theoretical decline and a decline in clinical efficacy in the field of psychoanalysis. Or whether classical psychoanalysis has not been adequate to deal with the new cultural situation and its effect on personal psychology. Or whether there has been simply a loss of interest in both its theory and practice as cultural fashions have changed, although the theory and practice of analysis might be in a healthy state. We also want to ask whether the new therapies are fads, feeding the popular appetite for sensationalism and immediate gratification, or whether they are genuine and legitimate forms of therapy for people who are not interested in or who can't afford a standard form of psychoanalysis, that is, whether they are simply alternative forms of therapy. We also want to talk a bit about the shifts in the culture that have accompanied or produced the changes in attitudes towards psychoanalysis and the stampede toward the more exotic and more satisfying modes of therapy, that is, more satisfying personally, socially, sexually. In addition, some attention should be paid to the unorthodox, non-Freudian schools of analysis that have been in existence for some time. And then there are the French analysts, who, as you know, have been seducing and mystifying American academics with their rhetoric. We hope that someone will be able to comment on Lacan, the French obscurantist and magician who has married Freud to Lévi-Strauss, and thrown in structural linguistics as a wedding present.

This is a tall order for one evening, and we are all too sophisti-

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cated to imagine that one panel can solve problems that have not been solved for years or for decades. But we hope at least to air the main issues. I should say too that we have tried to make the discussion as representative as possible by having as many different views as we could without, however, creating a free-for-all.

We have asked a number of people to act as discussants, that is, to open the discussion. Each of the speakers here will talk for about fifteen minutes. And then we are going to ask them to control their natural tendencies to argue with each other so that we can call on the discussants. After that, perhaps, they can have the last word.

The first speaker will be Dr. Joel Kovel, who is Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He is the author of *White Racism: A Psycho-History*, and more recently, of a book I am sure you have all seen, *A Complete Guide to Therapy*. Dr. Kovel.

Joel Kovel: Anyone who has observed the psychoanalytic scene for a while with a reasonably open eye can readily ascertain that this oddly venerable profession (since it is well less than a century old) is facing two rather vexing dilemmas. From the one side it appears that psychoanalysis—at least in America—has for some time ceased to be in the vanguard of thought; even as its ideas have become so widely diffused as to permeate the general culture, it has lost that cutting edge, that astonishing sense of penetration which characterized Freud and the first generation of his followers. And from the other side, psychoanalytic practitioners have for a number of years found it increasingly problematic to make a living by their skill. Either the market has become saturated, or it is actually diminishing as people look to other forms of treatment for their emotional ills. In any case there is no doubt that the prestige of psychoanalysis is lower in psychiatric training centers than it was a decade or two ago; fewer psychiatric residents apply for psychoanalytic training now than did then; and those who do undertake that arduous route are only rarely able to look ahead to a career spent in the exclusive practice of analysis. The patients simply aren't there; and those who are, all too often can't afford it. So goes the shop talk; and such, it seems, is the drift of things.

The trend is by no means absolute. Substantial numbers of people in the academic and artistic community remain deeply influenced by psychoanalytic thought and seek further training. Meanwhile, those who command the skill—whether obtained medi-

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cally or nonmedically—are not exactly languishing. In fact, the psychoanalytic profession seems evermore resolutely organized and prepared to fight for its share of the psychotherapeutic dollar, indeed has even mounted lobbying efforts in cognizance of the fact that the state and third-party payers in general are playing an increasingly important role in its economic future. One has even noted a short-term resurgence of interest in psychoanalysis—both for its ideas and as a mode of treatment. Nonetheless, the sagging fortune of psychoanalysis is a reality—which leads us to the interesting question of whether the creative atrophy of psychoanalysis and its economic beleaguerment are in some way related to each other. Are the two functional elements in some deeper historical contradiction which possesses the psychoanalytic project as a whole?

I believe this to be the case; and since I am inclined to view such things as a Marxist, I will begin exploring the contradiction as it manifests itself economically. There are three ways in which psychoanalysts might encounter a relatively decreasing demand for their services. First there is the possibility that forms of neurosis only marginally conducive to psychoanalysis are becoming preponderant—one thinks here of the increasing notice being given to diffuse narcissistic disturbances as against the classical symptom neurosis for which the technique was first developed. Then there are those prospective patients who may have analyzable disturbances but simply do not seek psychoanalytic help, either because they do not define their emotional ills in a psychological way, or, if they do see themselves as psychologically troubled, think in terms of another therapeutic modality than psychoanalysis. And, finally, there are those who could and want to be analyzed, but are dissuaded owing to lack of money and/or time.

Now, these conditions point to something one but rarely finds discussed in psychoanalytic writings, namely, that psychoanalysis is a definite kind of relationship between individuals who have a real historical function. In other words, the analyst is not someone trained to handle a narrow technical problem but an agent engaged in a particular social dialogue mediated by time and money. Similarly, the analysand is not like the hypothetical medical patient who brings his disease to the doctor-analyst, but rather the other agent in the dialogue. Since dialogue implies a verbal exchange between two consciousnesses, it is essentially an intersubjective process. Thus, for psychoanalysis to take place there must be a psychoanalytic subject—that is, a kind of person who is able to relate in a psychoan-

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alytic way, who shares a common language with the analyst and a common assumptional world. This may seem like mere common sense, but what raises it above the level of triviality is the fact that the psychoanalytic subject is a historical personage, one who arises at a particular juncture, changes as history develops, and who may even undergo a metamorphosis into a nonpsychoanalytic form. And this raises the still more intriguing question of whether and to what extent the very categories invoked by Freudian discourse have a historical variability and contingency.

Psychoanalysts are not given to investigating such questions, and this may have something to do with their own historical situation. As to what this is, let us return to the third of the difficulties encountered by analysts as they attempt to keep themselves in business, namely, the matter of time and money. You can search high and low among the annals of the discipline and find scarce a phrase concerning the real economics of an analyst's work as it relates to the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. A good deal of practice has to do with the fee, of course, but a sharp distinction is made between what is often called the "reality" of the analyst and the patient's fantasies about money within the analytic situation. Elucidating the latter and bringing them within consciousness and the organization of the ego is what analysis is all about, while the former category is part of the given structure of the world and does not concern the work of psychoanalysis, indeed, if it did, would blur that attention to psychic reality which is the *sine qua non* of analytic work. Psychoanalysis—so goes the standard opinion—acts to accommodate the pleasure principle to the reality principle, and not to change the reality principle itself, or to investigate its contents very far. But the analyst's reality plays an ambiguous role within the structure of reality as a whole. It mediates between society and the individual patient much as the body mediates between the biological and psychological realms. And behind the opacity of the fee lies a set of choices with definite consequences for practice. There is a truism here, with which we are all familiar. It holds that the analyst, being a member of a professional elite, belongs to the upper-middle class, charges accordingly and gets a clientele with the same kind of class structure in return, hence that his theory and practice are somehow "class bound." This notion is no more than a truism because it fails to take class as more than a matter of income. Class, however, is a dynamic relationship having to do with social activity; and until this aspect is brought into focus, we will not understand much about the cultural predicament of psychoanalysis.

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To do so, let us consider a hypothetical analyst's rejoinder to a complaint about the exclusionary nature of his fee. It is true, he might say, that it costs a given individual a great deal to make use of my services. But this is due to a real conflict in which I am caught and cannot abolish without losing my identity as an analyst. On the one hand, I have been trained comparably to others in my professional cadre and have a reasonable right to live like them. On the other hand, however, the nature of my work makes it necessary for me to spend a great deal of *time* with each patient—far, far more than other physicians do with theirs. Hence I may only see a relatively tiny number of patients and must charge each comparably more. In fact, if you study the matter, you will see that the average physician earns more per hour than I. He does so in a traditionally capitalistic manner by introducing technology, hiring a labor force and improving efficiency by combining with other doctors. Thus, he is able to process many more patients per unit time than did his forebears, and so keeps the cost per patient manageable without sacrificing his profit.

An analyst, however, can do none of this and remain an analyst. The peculiar nature of his work closes off to him most of the standard manoeuvres by means of which economic exigencies are confronted in the capitalist world. For the analyst is pledged to attend to subjectivity. He cannot therefore employ any technology, since technology necessarily involves an objectification of the problem to be solved, nor can he employ ancillary help or work in a group without breaking into the exquisitely intimate personal relationship with his patient that is the necessary precondition for an exploration of the subjective world.

Good psychoanalytic work eschews any form of gimmickry or speedup. The analyst, as one of my supervisors told me, should have all the time in the world. The unconscious, which is the true object of his concern, cannot be coaxed. This is not to say that the analyst's role is a passive one. However, his work is aimed primarily at the resistances which hold the unconscious back, not at the unconscious itself. The unconscious has spontaneity but will not be bought cheaply. In fact, it may be said to resist exchange-value. It not only refuses to be tied to any particular object in the world; it also abolishes the very logic of the object-world. It has to rise on its own until it is present to be tethered in a web of interpretations; and the analyst has to wait as patiently for it to appear an an eskimo fishing over a hole in the ice. Whether or not this is the most therapeutic way to deal with a large number of human circumstances in which

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emotional help is needed is another matter which we cannot explore here. But insofar as psychoanalysis comprises something unique or valuable—and this would have to include its capacity to encounter the unconscious—its praxis must entail an attitude toward time which is radically contrary to everyday standards. And as with time, so with money, such being the dictum of capitalist relations. Along with love, the unconscious cannot be bought. All that can be purchased—and this is indeed dear—is the real-world time of an individual who is more or less enabled to engage his unconscious in a process of self-reflection.

From the above, then, it might be said that the analyst's predicament is not so much a simple fidelity to upper bourgeois class values as it is the contradiction between this fidelity and a praxis that precisely reverses the main historical movement of the society which generates the bourgeois as its dominant social type. And if this is true, then the failure to grapple with such a contradiction might help us to account for the cultural stagnation of psychoanalysis today.

What we do and what we know we reciprocally relate to each other. Freud's discovery of the unconscious was predicated more than anything else on his development of the method of free association. This remains the touchstone of psychoanalytic work. Yet if psychoanalysis is unable to recognize the historical dimension revealed by this method or praxis, then it will be unable to complete its theory, will need to remain circumscribed in its practice, and, in short, will languish as a vital cultural force. And such a failure of recognition is the real consequence of a class loyalty to the dominant social type, for the well-known but oft forgotten reason that a historically dominant class has an interest in obliterating a sense of the history by which it came to be and could pass away.

To achieve a real recognition of history means, then, at the very least that psychoanalysis has to adopt a critical position toward society. Freud left a legacy of ambivalence on this theme, as he vacillated between radical culture-critique, e.g., in "Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness" or "Future of an Illusion," and a concurrence, as Adorno put it, "with the bourgeois contempt of instinct which is itself a product of precisely the rationalization that he dismantled." By and large, later generations of analysts—particularly in the United States—have repressed the negativity out of Freud's ambivalence and have settled instead for a narrow and conforming professionalism. The guild status of psychoanalysis takes the legitimate function of safeguarding quality patient care

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and conflates it with the need to keep the critical faculty torpid. In any case the more radical cultural writings of Freud are largely treated as curios by psychoanalytic institutes, and most American analysts are surprised to learn that their calling has any socially subversive aspects.

The result has been the development of a bureaucratic mentality at the heart of psychoanalytic institutions, theories and—inevitably—practices. The "Information Manual on Parliamentary Procedures" of the International Psychoanalytic Association, for example, runs sixty-eight pages and looks as though it could have been drafted either by representatives of the Internal Revenue Service or—one can only hope—by a latter-day Lewis Carroll. What makes a form of activity bureaucratic, in my opinion, is not merely its effort to introduce rationality as such but rather to adopt a peculiar form of rationalization. Here the semblance of rational discourse is used to conceal fundamental social contradictions under the guise of resolving them. Inevitably under these conditions the rationalization becomes a fresh source of contradiction and engenders further—and more alienated—forms of reasoning until the original and dynamic source of the problem becomes obliterated, and the game is played out in terms of reified abstractions. Such is the pathway to sterile academicism taken by a scientific group that uncritically aligns itself with dominant social interests. Analysts are familiar with this kind of rationalization as it manifests itself in an individual neurosis but have much more trouble recognizing their participation in it as subjects in their own work. To achieve such recognition is to revivify the spirit of critique within psychoanalysis.

Were the critical sense to be restored to psychoanalysis, some new vistas would open. The "timelessness" of the unconscious would appear, not as some mysterious emanation from the beyond, but as the subjective moment in a historical dialectic. For time is not simply a physical category or even a narrowly psychological one. Of equal importance, time is a function of historical development. Specifically the binding of time, by which we mean a socially imposed parcelling and quantification, is basic to the accumulation of capital, which is to say, to the entire development of our society. In this respect the "timelessness" of the unconscious is nothing less than the manifestation within the individual of his resistance to time's historical binding. The unconscious is what is left behind the rest of history, the one part of us that adamantly refuses the commodity form.

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The fate of time within capitalism has by no means been a unitary one at any stage of its history, but has moved in two opposed directions which in themselves define one of the innumerable points of contradiction within bourgeois society. From the standpoint of production the entire development of capital is dependent upon controlling the temporal input of the worker, both to convert it into a quantifiable commodity and to ensure increasing productivity. Thus production comes to seem autonomous in capitalist society. From this angle, a large portion of everyday life which had been relatively undifferentiated in precapitalist society is turned into units of productive activity—i.e., becomes *bound.* These units, and the portion of social existence which they subtend, are drawn into the fitful, yet inexorable development of rationality during the modern era. It should not go without saying at this point that the sphere of rationality so engendered is shadowed from the beginning by domination and unfreedom.

The social time split off as a result of the emergence of a distinct sphere of productive rationality is not without an important historical fate of its own. As the province of personal life, and mainly conducted within the worlds of the family and childhood, this portion is characterized by possibilities for intimacy and instinctual gratification, and consequently by an unbound temporality distinct from that of production. Unbound time becomes the location of desire as bound time is that of rationality. And its purest distillation is found in the unconscious.

The distinction between these two spheres, in some measure characteristic of all social groups, takes on a qualitatively different aspect in bourgeois society because of its radical alteration of work time, the general alienation characteristic of work in capitalism and the split between work and domesticity. As a result, personal life within individual families becomes greatly intensified and the realms of bound and unbound time come to seem sharply opposed to one another. Indeed, a rough sort of coefficient of bound versus unbound time can be defined for different phases in the development of modern society.

Within this relationship the proportion of unbound time rises as a result of the increasing productivity of labor—mediated largely by technology—and the increasing priority given to the consumption of commodities in advanced capitalist societies. A major manifestation of this shift has been the decline in child labor and its replacement by an increasingly protracted and complex phase of childhood marked by the needs of consumption and not production.

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These processes are not automatic but occur in the course of a continued struggle in which each mode of temporality is subjected to continued pressures from its counterpart. From the one side, the sphere of productive time is a perpetual battleground between the forces of capital, which attempts to introduce ever more rationalization and control, and those of labor, which rebels against work itself and sets desire against the inroads of rational compulsion. And from the other, the sphere of unbound time is no less a battleground, since it is within this domain that socialization is carried out, desire is given shape, and loyalty to the order of things is secured. It is within such a juncture that psychoanalysis and other therapies need to be seen as social formations.

Psychoanalysis made its appearance when the separate developments of desire and rationality had reached a stage of critical opposition, in other words, when psychoanalytic subjectivity could emerge as a social type. The structures of infantile sexuality and ego-control seen within this type of subjectivity are therefore not to be regarded as immemorial—although they do have what one could call a transhistorical aspect. In their entirety, however, they are specific historical formations dependent upon the overall development of the institutions of everyday life. As these are in a more or less constant state of crisis owing to the contradictions of capitalist society, we are in a position to understand how particular patterns of neurosis and therapeutic remediation arise at different historical points. Freud's genius from this angle was to discover a kind of inspired mediation between the two movements of cultural development; and this is what has accounted for the endless fertility of his paradigms. The praxis of self-reflection he devised drew on a portion of Western rationality that had not succumbed to domination and unfreedom and so remained capable of conjugation with the secret desires of the bourgeois world.

I am not here to engage in any ritual adulation of Freud, who is best honored, as are all thinkers, through a critique of what is backward, or at least ambivalent in his work. I am asserting however that his creative power—and that of psychoanalysis—lay in the spirit of negativity and opposition which infuses his thought. Through Freud's sensitivity to the act of refusal embedded in the unconscious he broke out of the narrow and static mold which hampered then and still hampers the prevailing medicalized conception of human neurosis. And this is a spirit which psychoanalysis needs to nurture if it is to remain historically alive.

For just as a certain juncture of forces created a psychoanalytic

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subject, so does their continual development presage a postanalytic type. The widespread recognition within psychoanalytic circles of different indications for analysis and modifications of technique bears witness to just such an eventuality—as does, indeed, the even more striking appearance of a babel of new therapies during recent decades. These developments are widely observed, but almost no attempt is made to comprehend them as a manifestation of deep-seated historical forces.

Do the dwindling fortunes of psychoanalysis point towards its demise in a society of increasing scarcity and administration? Foolish as it may be to predict, I would venture to guess that this will not occur, despite the whole sea of troubles which threatens to swamp it. I do so on the basis of the fact that history is not reducible to economic or crudely material factors. Thus any development that captures the spirit of an age will remain as an active, indeed as a material, force no matter how beset by objective exigencies. And since it was Freud who, more than anyone else, showed us the reasons in the human heart why this should be so, I do not think that what is hopeful in the future will ever let psychoanalysis go. Psychoanalysis may seem at times like the last wheeze of our humanistic tradition; but so long as it clings to its critical spirit it may yet fulfill Freud's hope to become a living part of the humanism that may come.

William Phillips: Thank you. I hope that there will be time later for somebody to question you. To press you on what the clinical implications might be of what is obviously a class theory of psychoanalysis.

The next speaker will be Dr. Jacob Arlow, editor of the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, past president of the American Psychoanalytic Association. Dr. Arlow.

Jacob Arlow: If distance lends enchantment, it also supplies perspective. This is one advantage historians have over those who comment on the current scene. I am keenly aware of this as I confront the subject of psychoanalysis today. During the past ten to fifteen years, many voices have been heard proclaiming that psychoanalysis is dead. My presentation may be regarded as a rebuttal to this statement. Most of these pronouncements seem to have been made in the context of ideological struggles, sometimes professional, sometimes political in nature. In support of their claims, the doomsayers of

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psychoanalysis point to various developments, which they interpret as evidence that psychoanalysis is no longer appealing, relevant or valid.

One thing analysts have learned is that things are seldom as they seem. Accordingly, if I avoid simplified pronouncements, if I emphasize the complexity of the phenomena we are discussing, and if I suggest that the changes we observe regarding psychoanalysis constitute in large measure an index of profound social and political transformations that have taken place in recent years, I hope that I will not come to be regarded as an automatic apologist.

The verdict concerning the fate of psychoanalysis is usually subsumed under three headings: psychoanalysis, it is said, no longer appeals to physicians as a specialty to be pursued, nor to patients as a mode of treatment, nor to the public at large and to the intellectual community in particular as a body of knowledge or as a vision of man. In our discussion, it would be well to separate the first two statements from the third, inasmuch as they pertain to psychoanalysis as a profession.

It is a fact that in the past ten years the number of students enrolled in the psychoanalytic training programs of the American Psychoanalytic Association has risen only from 1,000 to 1,100, that is, ten percent. Given the much greater rise in the number of graduates from medical school, this figure represents a decline in the proportion of graduates entering psychoanalytic training. The same holds true for the number of graduate physicians entering the field of psychiatry, and of these a smaller percentage are seeking training as psychoanalysts. There are many reasons for this development. I will mention only those known to me directly from my experience with undergraduate students of medicine and with psychiatrists. Psychiatry and psychoanalysis today, compared with those professions during the heady days following World War II, are no longer the areas of medicine where the new and exciting developments are taking place. It is in fields like cardiac surgery and the new biochemistry of internal medicine that the imagination of today's medical students is stirred. The field of medicine today, compared with that of forty years ago, is so complex and difficult a body of knowledge to master that few students are willing to relinquish a skill so arduously acquired to enter a field where this knowledge ultimately becomes either peripheral or largely irrelevant.

In addition, there are weighty practical problems. For the medical graduate to become a psychoanalyst entails the pursuit of

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two additional courses of specialized study, first in psychiatry and then in psychoanalysis. Training is long, difficult and costly, and only one out of three completes the program. The average graduate of a training institute is usually in his thirties or close to forty by the time he is accredited. This prolonged a period of economic dependence and professional inferiority as an apprentice is out of keeping with the spirit of the times, which is oriented towards fast relief with new and improved products.

Economic and political factors cannot be excluded from these considerations. Nowadays the prospect of financial reward for the physicians in the practice of psychoanalysis is dim when compared with the earnings prospects of physicians in other specialties: specialties that entail comparable or even shorter periods of training. Third-party payments and government funding of programs of medical care have had a critical impact on all medicine. As a result, the profession of psychoanalysis for physicians is at a distinct disadvantage competitively. Even for psychiatrists, it is much more lucrative to use modalities of treatment such as drugs, group therapy, etc., than to use psychoanalysis. One reaches a greater number of patients, although these patients form a different segment of the population from those for whom psychoanalysis is the indicated mode of therapy. In response to the surging political events of the sixties, beginning with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the government embarked upon a policy of discouraging long-range psychotherapy in general and psychoanalytic treatment in particular in favor of methods of treatment that would touch the largest numbers of people in the shortest possible time. This was the period of storefront mental hygiene centers and programs of community crisis intervention. To a large extent these programs ended in failure and the enthusiasm they generated has long since waned. Nonetheless, the influence of these policies persists and their implications have not been lost on the modern medical graduate, who is keenly sensitized to problems of grants, subsidies and third-party payments. In these days, when the price of everything is inflated, it becomes impossible for the medical psychoanalyst to keep up with his colleagues by indefinitely raising his fee per session. This is especially true for the younger practitioner. If he attempts to maintain his fees in keeping with medical standards, he may, in effect, price himself out of the field.

But while the economics of psychoanalysis for the physician may have lost its appeal, psychoanalysis as the basis for psychotherapy definitely has not. It is and has remained the fundamental

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approach of most psychiatrists practicing psychotherapy. While they do not enroll for formal training in institutes, many psychiatrists do arrange to be analyzed themselves, to secure supervision from qualified analysts, and to organize programs of reading either alone or with colleagues pursuing a similar course. How large a group of psychiatrists secure this secondary form of training is difficult to say. Many of them are graduates of residency training programs, where they have been exposed to psychoanalytic concepts as the core of psychopathology; they have gotten a considerable amount of supervision from the psychoanalytic point of view and they have become acquainted with the literature of psychoanalysis. And if the number of students enrolled in the institutes of the American Psychoanalytic has risen only slightly, the same does not hold true for other institutes offering training in psychoanalysis.

In fact, we are witnessing a tremendous surge of interest in training for psychoanalysis. Today, in the city of New York alone, there are almost thirty institutes offering training programs in psychoanalysis. There may be more; I do not know. I can only guess what the situation is in Los Angeles. It may be that all told, there are as many as 1,000 people at the present time receiving psychoanalytic training in the city of New York. Most of these are psychologists, social workers, clergymen, psychiatric nurses and others who in the main are excluded from training in the institutes that require a medical degree, a requirement that does not pertain in most parts of Europe and South America. In fact, the popularity of psychoanalysis today is such that the term analysis is used for almost any kind of psychotherapy. Psychoanalysis and psychotherapy have become identical in the public mind. Candidates trained in these institutes outside the American Psychoanalytic Association have their own professional organizations, their scientific meetings and programs; they publish and maintain journals of psychoanalytic interest, and they attend meetings of all the psychoanalytic associations. A recent meeting on the subject of the psychoanalytic treatment of the borderline patient, for which an admission fee was charged, drew an audience of 1,800 people. Apparently, people are not only still interested in psychoanalytic knowledge, they are also willing to pay for it. If psychoanalysis is dead, there are a lot of people who are warming themselves by the corpse. In this age of paraprofessional practice, paramedical professionals are no longer regarded lightly, and they represent a genuine competitive challenge to the medically trained psychoanalyst.

This leads us to the second heading of the verdict concerning

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psychoanalysis, namely, what has become of the patients. Has psychoanalysis lost its appeal for them? Here, too, the question is not easy to answer. While it seems clear that the practicing medical psychoanalyst has fewer patients than he did before (and this has been verified in several studies), we can by no means be certain that fewer people are being treated by psychoanalysis, in other words, that fewer people are turning to psychoanalysis as a form of therapy than before.

For a long time, a considerable number of patients seen by analysts were referred by physicians, general practitioners and specialists. Schooled in the tradition of organic pathology, most physicians, however, were never comfortable with the dynamic, depth psychology of psychoanalysis. When the drug companies began to produce in tremendous quantities a great variety of medications supposedly specific for anxiety and depression, many practitioners, as well as psychiatrists, enthusiastically seized upon these new additions to their therapeutic armamentarium. Many of the patients now being treated by drugs would have, in the past, been treated by analysis. The sale of drugs like Valium, for instance, has soared to what is a truly terrifying level. Iatrogenically induced drug addiction is a serious problem in this country. Even if we disregard the reasons why so many people, especially the young, turn to drugs, we cannot overlook the fact that the medical profession has contributed to the growing tolerance of drug use by its readiness to prescribe the quick, easy, temporary, dependency-inducing relief that comes from drugs rather than to advise patients to confront their problems with soul-searing honesty.

Self-scrutiny and deep soul-searching do not stand very high on the agenda in the existential mood of our times. The pleasure of the present moment and the self-validating experience of immediate sensuality are taken as ends in themselves. Writing ten years ago, Anna Freud said "analysis offers enlightenment about the inner world, about man's struggle within himself. The present battle cry," she added, "is often man against society." In this climate, introspection becomes irrelevant and involvement with other people is being replaced by commitment to an impersonal mass. Understanding people as individuals is not as appealing as the prospect of manipulating social institutions. Thus Sterba said that the devaluation of the human being as an individual and of his feelings is characteristic of our period. The members of the turbulent generation of the sixties are now mostly in the age group of thirty to forty, and it was from

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this age group of university graduates that a significant segment of the analytic population was drawn in the past. It is possible that the alienation of this group from psychoanalysis is only a temporary phenomenon.

There is another trend that has been developing over a longer period of time. The nature of the presenting psychopathology seems to have changed. Controlled studies have demonstrated that the percentage of neurotics coming for treatment has declined steadily over the past thirty years. These were the patients for whom the primary indication was always classical psychoanalysis. Today, the practitioner is more likely to see patients with narcissistic character disorders, perverse characters, and borderline personalities. Furthermore, the patients seem to be older and frequently have problems of alcoholism and drug abuse. This is a far cry from the type of patient for whom psychoanalysis represents the best form of therapy.

These changes in the nature of current psychopathology reflect a transformation in our culture and in the moral values of the community. What used to be unthinkable has now become expressible, what is expressible becomes do-able. The untrammeled expression of what used to be private fantasy life, be it of a perverse, criminal or narcissistic character, has found its way into the popular literature and the media. I am not suggesting censorship as a form of mental hygiene, nor do I minimize the profound social and political problems involved, problems that involve freedom of the individual and freedom of expression. What I am trying to say is this: conflicts over impulses, perverse, criminal or narcissistic, which in previous years the individual tried to contain within himself through the mechanism of symptom formation, now find less warded-off, less distorted expression in the psychopathological entities the therapist encounters. The attitude of society is an inexorable dimension of pathogenesis and psychopathology.

There are two conclusions that I think can be drawn from the foregoing. First, it is difficult to judge from the facts available to us whether or not psychoanalysis really has lost its appeal to physicians interested in psychotherapy or to patients seeking psychotherapy. My second conclusion is that the current trend does not necessarily reflect on the appeal, the validity, or the relevance of psychoanalysis for today's world. It may be that what we observe taking place around the theory and practice of analysis is only a measure of the changes that have taken place in our society, changes which have affected and will continue to affect the development of psychoanaly-

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sis as a profession, as they have affected medicine in general. The main question is whether psychoanalysis will be able to meet the challenges imposed by these developments. Judging from the recent, rich contributions concerning the nature and the treatment of narcissistic character disorders, borderline states and perversions, one may conclude that the challenge has been accepted and dealt with constructively.

Now for the final question, the ideological one. Proponents of various ideologies have attempted to wed their principles to psychoanalysis. These marriages have hardly ever turned out to be happy ones. Revolutionary thinkers and conservatives, religious believers and atheists, at different times, have all perceived their principles to be in harmony or congruent with the findings of psychoanalysis, and they have tried to use psychoanalytic insights to validate their ideology and to extend its influence. Psychoanalysis, in fact, does not project any specific world outlook of its own. Freud explicitly asserted this position and maintained it, for all of his penchant to philosophize. Psychoanalysis is a science of human thought and behavior derived from the natural sciences, biology and the social sciences. There are, to be sure, certain values implicit in the principles of psychoanalytic technique. These involve respect for the integrity and individuality of each patient. Since the psychoanalytic situation requires complete candor and honesty, and the patient is expected to say freely whatever comes to his mind, psychoanalytic therapy in a real sense becomes possible only in a free democratic society where the rights of the individual are guaranteed and where the individual can feel reasonably secure from persecution because of his ideas.

The essential contribution psychoanalysis has to make regarding the understanding of human nature is based upon a unique method of investigation governed by standard conditions. There are many levels of encounter in the total analytic experience. Closest to the fundamental data is the level of clinical observation. At an increasing distance from this confrontation with the data are the levels of clinical interpretation, generalization, and clinical theory. Up to this point of conceptualization, psychoanalysis deals with extrapolations, inferences and generalizations from clinical observation. Beyond this level is the level of metapsychology, a body of theoretical speculation and paradigm not directly inferable from the data, but based on models borrowed in a metaphorical spirit from other frames of reference. Quite independent of all the foregoing, as Waelder pointed out, is the encounter with Freud's personal philoso-

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phy. This is the level about which the general public knows the most. "Civilization and its Discontents" and "The Future of an Illusion" have become classic texts. Much less is generally appreciated of Freud's revolutionary contribution, namely, psychoanalysis as a scientific method for studying the human mind. It was Lenin who said that it is the fate of great revolutionary thinkers to be reviled for their ideas and attacked during their lifetime but to be revered in the next generation while their ideas and teachings are diluted and adulterated. This has, in fact, happened to Freud's scientific concepts. As far as Freud's philosophy is concerned, psychoanalysts, it seems to me, should be able to give a comprehensive account of what psychoanalysis is about but should not be called upon to defend any philosophy or to emulate Freud's espousal of a particular philosophy.

The structure of psychoanalytic theory today is by no means as monolithic as is supposed. Even the most superficial acquaintance with the current literature of psychoanalysis will demonstrate the many divergent and different theoretical positions. There are at least three principal stimuli to these developments. The first rises from the attempt to integrate findings relating to the borderline states and the narcissistic character disorders. The second stems from the long-range investigation of child development. The third can be traced to some dissatisfaction with the prevailing theoretical models and with an attempt to correlate the data of analytic observation with other fields, particularly linguistics, neurophysiology and communications systems. In the past six years, at least ten new English-language psychoanalytic journals have appeared. This plethora of contributions may be a mixed blessing, but it is hardly a symptom of scientific stagnation.

Psychoanalysis may not be in the forefront of popular or even academic interest today. It has, at least, been relieved of the burden of omniscience foisted upon it by enthusiastic converts anticipating miraculous transformation. While the practice of psychoanalysis as a profession has been caught up in the turmoil that has overtaken medicine and the other healing sciences, the science of psychoanalysis continues to make steady and by no means undramatic progress. It is a safe statement that psychoanalysis remains and will continue to be a reliable source of insight into man and the human condition.

William Phillips: Before introducing the next speaker, I would like to say that I suspect that somebody might challenge what might seem to be a contradiction in Dr. Arlow's presentation, that is, his

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assumption, his conclusion, that psychoanalysis is thriving, despite the fact that he has painted a very frightening picture of all the forces that seem to be destroying psychoanalysis. I should also try to clear up a misunderstanding. I am not aware that the organizers of this meeting were trying to organize a funeral service for psychoanalysis.

The next speaker is Steven Marcus, who is a well-known literary critic, a professor of English at Columbia University, Chairman of the English Department at Columbia. He is pertinent to the subject of this evening's discussion. I should mention that he has coedited with Lionel Trilling an abridged version of Ernest Jones' *Life and Work of Sigmund Freud.* And his latest book is called *Representations: Essays on Literature and Society.* Steven Marcus.

Steven Marcus: Few people interested in the state of psychoanalysis will be able to deny the circumstance that psychoanalysis occupies today a quite different place in American society and culture from the one in which it was situated a generation ago. Twenty-five years ago psychoanalysis was much closer to the centers of active, intellectual and cultural life in America than it appears to be now; psychoanalysis was a much more important, relevant, and momentous presence in the lives of those people who as groups constitute the intellectual and cultural professions in our society than it can claim to be at this moment. Intellectuals, university instructors, members of such professions as medicine and law, artists and writers, custodians of culture in museums and institutes, purveyors of culture in the arts and purveyors of entertainments and diversions in various parts of the culture industry tended to adhere in one way or another to the institution of psychoanalysis—it occupied a status and exerted an influence among them that has since visibly diminished, although it has not, to be sure, vanished altogether. And in turn the adherence and allegiance to psychoanalysis of such exceptionally visible and exemplary cultural groups gave to that institution a yet further enhanced prestige and helped its influence to diffuse and percolate into and permeate other sectors of American social and cultural life.

The attachment of such people to psychoanalysis located itself in two separate but related areas. Psychoanalysis was first looked to as a form of therapy. As you no doubt know, the history of the psychoanalytic movement in the United States tends to be idiosyncratic in the sense that the prestigious and orthodox Freudian organizations connected themselves virtually from the outset most closely with the profession of medicine, and made the therapeutic

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profession of psychoanalysis into a subdiscipline of medicine—or at least made matters appear that way. The consequences of this self-imposed prerequisite for certification were substantial. To my knowledge, in no modern Western culture does the profession of medicine enjoy a higher social esteem, reap larger economic rewards, or find itself invested with a greater diversity and weight of authority than that profession does in the United States. Primitive fantasies of magical powers, priestly privileges and esoteric knowledge continue to cloak our physicians even as those same physicians operate increasingly as technologists, engineers, and applied chemists. There are many reasons for the essential persistence of such beliefs among Americans (although the quality of that persistence, and its periodic, partial alternation from positive to negative, should also be noted), and I cannot pause to discuss them in detail. Figuring largely among them, however, was and probably still is the poignant and apparently incorrigible American sentiment that there is nothing finally that cannot be "fixed up"—including, it sometimes seems, life and death themselves. And certainly including one's psychic, sexual and personal life, one's career, one's difficulties with work, with mother, husband, wife, children, lover, friends, enemies, acquaintances, and pets, the pets of one's children, lover, friends, enemies, acquaintances, and so on. Many Americans were inclined to invest psychoanalytic therapy (and other therapies as well) with the power to fulfill such culturally supported aspirations, and although there is little doubt that in the course of therapy such fantasies came in, as they say, for due exploration and analysis, there is also little doubt that the profession as a whole was the direct beneficiary of this apparently ineradicable native impulse. And I must go on to say that I cannot recall, during the years in question, coming across many references in the professional literature to Freud's repeated admonitions that the major contributions that psychoanalysis had to offer would not finally be therapeutic in the accepted sense of the word. Such contributions, he held, would be found ultimately in education, in alterations of habits of child-rearing, in research and in applications of psychoanalytic theory and methods in a variety of cultural and scientific fields of endeavor.

An additional consequence of the official attachment of orthodox psychoanalysis to medicine was that it significantly limited the pool of talent from which the profession could renew and reproduce itself. Not only was this pool preselected in a particular manner; the premedical and then medical educations that psychoanalytic candi-

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dates had to undergo tended strongly to overprepare them in some skills that they would never draw upon as psychoanalytic therapists and radically to underprepare them in other intellectual skills that they would later sadly acknowledge as somehow matters of personal deficiency. The fact that many American psychoanalysts are so notoriously ill-read, a fact noted even twenty-five years ago, was never an encouraging circumstance—no matter how strongly it might be urged that knowing something about books and history and society had nothing necessarily to do with the strength of an analyst's therapeutic impulse or the power of his or her therapeutic acumen.

The second area to which people outside the profession tended to attach themselves had to do with psychoanalysis as a momentous radical intellectual discipline, an instrument of modernity by means of which the world could be reinterpreted, a new and critical perspective on man, society and history. It was a theory (with many subtheories), a means of research, and its applications to matters in fields beyond the immediate clinical purview promised to be rewarding. In this connection, the writings of Freud were of paramount interest and importance. It quickly became clear to those who were able to read that these writings were in the direct mainstream of the central intellectual and cultural tradition of the West. A distinct line was to be drawn from the adjuration of the oracle of Delphi to "Know thyself" to such writers of the Renaissance as Montaigne to the Romantic poets and nineteenth-century novelists to Freud. In his work a particular tradition of introspection came to culmination. The introspection as practiced in this tradition was largely secular, and its goals were those of rational understanding—in particular, a rationally governed understanding of that within us and without which was not rational. In this sense psychoanalysis was a cultural science or discipline of considerable dimensions. To be sure it could readily be vulgarized and misused, but that is the partial fate that any powerful new heuristic instrument has to undergo. Yet here too, even twenty-five years ago, disquieting signs and tendencies were to be made out. There were, for example, the unmistakable differences between the earlier generations of mostly European analysts and their American pupils and successors; nevertheless, these cultural differences could be in some degree discounted as part of the more general difference, as far as intellectual interests and range were concerned, between Europeans and Americans, especially Europeans born in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and Americans

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born in the first quarter of the twentieth. Moreover, psychoanalysis as an institutional organization had established itself through a series of isolations. Some of these isolations were necessary; others may have been more questionable. I have already mentioned the location of psychoanalysis within the medical profession. In addition, as psychoanalytic institutes and societies for the training of new analysts continued to grow, there was a tendency for the work in such bodies to be isolated still further from what was going on both scientifically and culturally in the worlds outside. Hence there occurred a further professional isolation of psychoanalysis within the medical profession, as well as beyond it. The long and difficult training of new analysts tended to focus on specific clinical and therapeutic practices, on the development of certain concrete and immediate skills, while questions of wider-ranging research and intellectual interest were by and large deferred or relegated to the periphery, where they were given peripheral attention. Moreover, the institution of Freudian analysis tended to evolve as something of a closed society. Its early history supported such a tendency. Its simultaneous location in and separation from the discipline of medicine stimulated the further development of formidable and at moments forbidding hierarchical modes of organization, dispensations of authority and allocations of reward and professional recognition. Although such problems are common to almost any professional organization, the tendency towards orthodoxy among psychoanalysts and their organizations was noted overtly, most bitterly perhaps by those who had broken with such groups and set up their own. However hyperbolic certain of these critical claims may have been, there is little question that there was some point to them, and that psychoanalysis was handling the problems of intellectual renewal, growth and new discovery with less than perfect tact or foresight. A certain confinement of view combined with the social and cultural ambitions of a customarily respectable and uncritical order to produce a general situation that did not bode well for the future.

Finally, psychoanalysis was isolated in yet another way. In establishing itself as it did, it largely cut itself off from the intellectual life of most American universities. This was not a bad thing before World War II, but it was damaging indeed when it continued after 1945. During the years that followed, the center of gravity of American intellectual life shifted, inexorably, we now can see, towards the university. Psychoanalysis had put forward or founded

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few connections between itself and the academic-intellectual world in America. As a cultural science or discipline it seemed very odd indeed that its filiations with departments and faculties in the social sciences, the humanities and the natural sciences were so few and far between. (Psychoanalysts are, of course, not entirely to blame for this deficiency; they were frequently unwelcome company within certain academic circles. But the question is complex and cannot be fully entered into here.) It is only in relatively recent years that such filiations have begun to play any significant role in many psychoanalytic organizations, and recent years may be a very late time indeed.

This is a very rough, abbreviated and excessively simplified outline of certain configurations that could be made out about Freudian psychoanalysis as it appeared in the contexts of American society and culture some twenty-five years or so ago. Its intellectual and social prestige among certain groups of Americans was very high; interest in it as therapy and theory was strong. It had its problems clinically, intellectually and socially as well. But it seemed secure and, I venture to say, seemed secure to itself.

Today matters appear in a very different light. Psychoanalysis no longer commands the interest that it once did; it has lost as an institution the centrality and authority it could once lay claim to, and has suffered a general loss of self-confidence as well—the last of these may be a useful development. There is some talk in certain quarters about "the death of psychoanalysis"—but such talk, like others before it, is premature. There is also talk in other quarters that psychoanalysis is now in the phase of what Thomas Kuhn has called "normal science"—but that, I believe, is whistling in the dark. Myriad influences and events have worked their consequences, and I can only touch upon a few of them here.

To begin with, the institution has generally gone along with the inflationary character of the economy. Ten, fifteen or twenty-five dollars for a fifty-minute hour in 1950 has become fifty, seventy-five and more for a forty-five minute session. To be sure, money is not the only force at play here, but sooner or later a point of diminishing returns has to be reached. Psychoanalysts have as a rule chosen to live in a certain moderately affluent—and identifiable—style. Their fees are to some extent an expression of this choice. One of the partial results of such a determination is the diminished number of psychoanalytic patients who are embarked upon a full analysis in the older sense of the term. According to a recent survey, analysts reported that only about twenty percent of their time was now spent in classical or

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full-scale analysis. My impression is that this figure represents a substantial falling off from the situation that obtained for similar analysts twenty-five years ago. The tendency is apparent: a large part of current analyses are conducted by the profession in order to reproduce itself. Other influences than money are at work in this connection, but we cannot overlook the economics of psychoanalysis within the context of American intellectual culture. It has traditionally been said in criticism of analysis that it could offer or afford too little to too few; today that observation applies more closely and uncomfortably than ever before.

Other circumstances have served less directly to weaken the hold of psychoanalysis in quarters where it once exerted substantial influence. Research in recent decades in the neurosciences—in neurochemistry and neurophysiology especially—has, in conjunction with the invention of a whole new range of mood- and mind-altering drugs, led to major changes in the practice of psychiatry and psychotherapy. Freud had in the past made his prediction about "the man with the syringe," and this prediction has at least in part been fulfilled. As a corollary to this development, the movement that is rather loosely called community psychiatry made further inroads in what was for a time the analytic hegemony in the profession of psychiatry. Members of this movement contended among other things that psychoanalysis had got its priorities misordered; this movement aimed in some of its extreme manifestations at some kind of direct social change or action; its interventions were of a very different kind than those ordinarily proposed by psychoanalysts. And in the embroiled social climate of the recent past it came in—as did drug research—for substantial funding. Finally, departments of psychiatry have taken notice of the fact that their best residents tend nowadays not to apply for candidacy in analytic institutes—a distinctively altered state of affairs as compared to a generation ago.

Along with these historical changes there has developed in the inter-years an astonishing variety of new kinds of therapies. I am not referring to changes within psychoanalytically guided therapies—although such changes have also occurred. I am referring to the growth and spread of such practices as behavior modification therapies and sex therapies, to take up only the most accessible end of a spectrum that ranges from a variety of drug therapies, encounter groups, marathon and weekend catharses to sensitivity training, touching courses and feeling games, primal screaming, aggressiveness raising, consciousness lifting, meditations, massages and who

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knows what else. Most of these practices are overtly hostile to psychoanalysis, though many of them consist of taking one or two pieces of psychoanalytic discovery, procedure or insight and transforming it or them into an entire therapeutic regime. From the point of view of psychoanalysis itself, these new formations have to appear as in large measure deformations of the complex theories of personality, development and therapy that the discipline has built up in its career of three-quarters of a century.

These phenomena do not, I believe, represent the same thing as the divisions, disputes and deviations that beset the psychoanalytic movement in its early years. It is no criticism of psychoanalysis to remark that it has always been in part something of a religion (albeit a secular one) and has been organized like a church. The early differences and splittings off—by Adler, Jung, Reich et al.—represented heresies and the subsequent establishment of new churches or sects. Activities like these are, according to historical sociologists of religion, characteristic of new religions in their formative periods. But many of the recent phenomena I have just referred to resemble cults more than sects or new religions, and cults, as Daniel Bell has recently observed, are ordinarily associated with religions in states of incipient or actual decline. They represent the search for immediate and authentic experience that an institution in deterioration can no longer give, especially when its organizational framework begins to fray and tatter. Cults typically claim that they have access to some special or transfiguring source of power, insight and knowledge that the orthodoxy and its bureaucratic functionaries have hidden, suppressed or diverted. They are frequently headed by some spellbinder or pundit who alone has the capacity to transmit the new teachings. They characteristically permit their adherents to act upon impulses that the orthodox institution had constrained, and they therefore offer the experiences of personal transcendence and liberation. They are magical, and they take effect very quickly, as magic commonly does. In turn, their magic also commonly passes away very quickly, and their initiates move on without intermission in search of new redemptions.

But these phenomena are also part of larger movements of cultural change in which psychoanalysis itself is involved. Psychoanalysis was created in particular cultural and historical sets of circumstances and bears upon it the markings of the contexts in which it originated. It came into being in the context of a liberal bourgeois culture and may in some measure be understood as an

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institution of late high bourgeois culture—in its strengths, weaknesses and contradictions. (I am being very condensed here.) And what we have been witness to in the last decade and a half is the beginning of the visible and rapid destabilization and dissolution of that culture. In the progressive and rapid discreditation and decline in the legitimacy of the values and beliefs of bourgeois culture, psychoanalysis as part of that culture has inevitably been adversely affected. In this sense the Marxists were right—psychoanalysis is, I think, a bourgeois science.

There is more than adequate irony in this. American culture and society have always been, in contrast with other like entities, in a state of rapid change. Within that context of incessant change, however, psychoanalysis took its roots in America and achieved its largest influence in three overlapping periods of what can be understood as factitious or pseudo-stability. There was first the large influx of European analysts which began in the 1930s amid the false or pseudo-stability of the Great Depression (there was a widespread sense that it might never end); this was followed by the pseudo-stability of World War II, when the nation and culture were united against common enemies; and this in turn was followed by the long postwar years and the pseudo-stability of recovery, steady progress, prosperity and even the factitious stability of the Cold War (which, it also seemed, might go on indefinitely, if not forever). In the general break-up that has since occurred we can now see how fragile and often misleading the sense of social and cultural stability and continuity within change could sometimes be.

Such larger alterations are usually accompanied by some kind of analogous alterations in personality or deeper cultural style. Although all sorts of people came as patients to the early generations of analysts, they by and large brought with them and were met by certain normative expectations and assumptions about what it meant to be an individual person. The character type referred to in such preconceptions was identifiably part of a general middle-class configuration. It valued and internalized the virtues of work, productivity, and various other kinds of disciplined behavior; it believed in rationality and in rational moral conduct; it tended to suspect pleasure and was uncommonly and ingeniously skilled at postponing gratification; it set great store by linguistic communication, both oral and written; it tended to be guilt-ridden and even in some sense to believe in the rightness and efficacy of that guilt. The neuroses it typically suffered from had to do with certain inhibitions, repres-

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sions, denials and arrestments. The symptoms typically had to do with diminution or loss of functions in sexuality and work. The psychopathologies of these patients were in the main a consequence of certain negative social forces and values as these were transmitted to and imposed upon them through their experiences with their parents, siblings and other kin. At the same time these persons tended largely to resent, dislike and discredit their neuroses. They did not feel that such deformations and thwartings were worthy of what a human being should be like. They tended as well to feel that such behaviors and thoughts and fears were not really parts of themselves; often they felt invaded by their afflictions. They tended, in other words, to regard their pathologies as ego-alien. The corollary of this belief was the notion that somewhere inside them was what, for want of another term, must be called a normal human being who had gotten lost. Or, if not lost, then deposed and displaced from his central and controlling position. Their aim in seeking psychological help was to bring this person back to his center and to have him reoccupy the place that was rightfully his.

I do not have to say that this very rough model is not as dominant or prevalent today as it was seventy-five years ago—although it surely cannot have disappeared altogether. My sense is, however, that a considerable part of the psychopathology that is visible today has as much to do with the decline and weakening of those social and cultural forces whose negative power was instrumental in the formation of the classical neuroses as it does with the persistence of such forces. This is not to say that domination and repression have been simply replaced by anarchy and unmitigated license among our middle classes. It is to say that the psychopathology that seems to prevail today has part of its origins in the decomposition of those structures which made bourgeois culture and family life the complex and often highly unpleasant things they were. What they have been replaced with, we may suspect, is something with its own questionable attributes, and what the relation of psychoanalysis to these developments might be is a subject for further discussion.

I have been suggesting that the fate of psychoanalysis is to a considerable degree entailed in the fate of bourgeois culture. I have implied the stricture that psychoanalysis—particularly in its American developments—accepted its place in that culture without adequate critical regard. I believe this to be largely true. Yet one cannot in all due honesty expect a cultural discipline whose very categories

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are derived from a specific historical context simply to transcend that context and leave its historical origins altogether behind. That, it seems to me, is one of the dilemmas that psychoanalysis is confronted with today—as it is a dilemma of all of us who share a historical identity that we cannot put aside but that is becoming in the light of current developments increasingly problematical.

William Phillips: Steven, before we go on to our discussants, I just thought I would comment that you raised a lot of interesting questions, but I think, and maybe some people will take this up, that two of your propositions might be arguable.

Steven Marcus: Only two?

William Phillips: Only two. And that is that when you speak of psychoanalysis as a product of bourgeois culture, the inevitable question is whether let's say, if you had a democratic socialist society, there would be no need for psychoanalysis, there would be no neuroses that need treatment of that kind.

The other implication, I think, that could be argued is that you speak of it as a bourgeois science, and the question in my mind is whether, let us say, sexual functioning is only a bourgeois virtue. And whether the cure of sexual malfunctioning is part of a science that can be called only bourgeois. Anyway, I think that these are some of the interesting questions that are raised by Marcus's paper.

Now as I said, we have eleven discussants. I don't know if you are all here. I will read off the names, and whoever gets up first will speak first.

(Laughter)

Otherwise you put the onus on me of giving priorities to some of you. Here are the eleven: Dr. Ethel Person; Dr. Arnold Cooper; Mr. Norman Birnbaum; Dr. Robert Lifton; Dr. C.C. Beals; Dr. Earl Wittenberg; Mr. William Barrett; Dr. Kurt Salzinger; Ms. Sonia Rudikoff; Dr. Stuart Schneiderman; and Dr. Henry Lowenfeld. All right, go ahead.

Kurt Salzinger: It seems that I have just heard two of what I consider orthodox views of psychoanalysis, presenting all the reasons for the crisis in psychoanalysis. I think they did show the exclusivism and went on to say that that is not the fault of the psychoanalyst, but of the culture; that if only the culture were a little better, a little more interested in bolstering honesty, then perhaps it would be able to profit from psychoanalysis. At the same time, we are told that psychoanalysis equals humanism. And yet we are told that there is a

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stampede toward nonpsychoanalytic treatment, towards overt sexual expression. What occurred to me was that this is a progression from the "oi" to the joy of sex.

I did want to make one point, because there is a kind of a stereopathy about psychoanalysis; the other side of it is the stereotyping of behaviorism: behaviorism is a technical thing; it is an engineering task; it is low level. It is for the obvious kinds of things, things you can see. But psychoanalysis is humanistic; it is basic; it is inner-life; it is a more interesting thing. It is the intellectual quality that one deals with, and so on. And I think that this is merely a matter of name-calling.

If psychoanalysis continues in that vein, it will not gain much. To simply say, oh, but it *is* humanistic, is not enough. It seems to me that there are too many signs that it is not humanistic at all. I think that it is exclusive. I think that by saying that people are being too narcissistic, it is misunderstanding the cultural changes that are taking place. And all the people cannot really be wrong that quickly. Those are some factors that one has to take into account.

William Phillips: Thank you. Who wants to go next? This is Sonia Rudikoff, who has written on many literary questions, and on a number of psychological questions, for magazines like *Commentary*, *Partisan Review*, and others.

Sonia Rudikoff: Well, I was interested that the speakers mentioned economic, historical, and social factors relating to the position of psychoanalysis today. But they did not mention demographic factors. There are perhaps two hundred and fifteen million people in the country today. In the forties, a hundred or a hundred and fifty million was more like it. I wonder whether the members of the panel don't think that it is not psychoanalysis that has changed so much in the number of its adherents or even in its capacity for influence. And certainly it has not changed very much in the number of people applying for training. It has been perhaps a net decline because it has not increased quite so much as was thought in the late forties, but what has really happened is that other therapies have grown up around it. If you consider, for example, the membership of the American Psychoanalytic Association, with considerable overlap between central membership, New York Institute, local societies that don't belong to the national and so forth, the recent data don't put it very much beyond twenty-six hundred. In a country of two hundred and fifteen million! This compares in a very interesting way with the number of psychiatrists: twenty-three thousand, I think, is the latest

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figure. The number of clinical psychologists and practicing counselling psychologists equals the number of psychiatrists. The number of trained social workers, psychiatric social workers, approaches sixty thousand.

A few more facts I think might be relevant here. In the past twenty or twenty-five years, one development that I think has been of extreme importance for the present state of psychoanalysis, and certainly will be in the future, is the establishment of counselling centers at all major and even minor colleges and universities. This means that, of a student population enrolled in post-secondary institutions—the student population is now between ten and eleven million, according to the people who are involved in these counselling centers—between twenty and twenty-five percent of the students receive therapy at these counselling centers. That is something like two million students. These are people who may have very brief therapy, or rather extensive therapy, extending over a year, or four years, or more. It is not psychoanalysis; it is obviously psychoanalytically affected therapy. It may be very effective. These are people who will not be referred to psychoanalysts, and may not ever seek psychoanalytic help. It is a very important group in the population.

I think it is important to be very specific, because others have been more general. Half a million families are treated in family service agencies, by various sorts of psychoanalytically oriented therapy. This means that over a million people are affected by this, considering the size of families. These again are people who have become visible in the past twenty-five years.

The group really must consider problems of this sort rather than the isolated state of psychoanalysis, and its influence before and after.

William Phillips: Thank you. Of course Sonia Rudikoff raised the question of why so many people are getting treatment: the country is so crazy.

(Laughter)

Who wants to go next? Dr. Lifton.

Robert Lifton: Let me respond to a couple of issues rather than to specific people, because I think that certain issues are wafting through the panel. One is the obvious issue, but not focussed in on, of the difference between the great intellectual revolution of Freud's corpus of work and psychoanalysis itself via Freud, and the issue of psychoanalysis as a profession and especially a therapeutic profession. I think both are in crisis. The crisis of the profession has been

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talked about, and has to do with hierarchy and guild, and social change. The crisis of ideas, around psychoanalysis, is the more interesting, more complex question, and brings up the viability or the historical endurance of intellectual revolutions, and the extent or moment of either revitalization or replacement with something new that would have been impossible without the parent idea system. That has not been talked about.

The other kind of thing that has not been referred to is an impulse I see, toward psychoanalytic fundamentalism as a response to crisis. And why would we not expect this, since it is a response to crisis throughout culture, in various ways, whether you talk about the religious cults or other things. And there are some analysts who are withdrawn from institutes because they are getting too liberal, who really want to go back to the original word.

But I think the more characteristic response is the vogue on narcissism, for instance; I will be perhaps over-simple, but, I think, truthful insofar as I can be. I think here we see an example of a mixture of a little bit of intellectual shoring up, an element of fundamentalism, and the blowing up of a very limited set of ideas into a major intellectual achievement. Actually, I think that the preoccupation with narcissism covers up what is really happening in our culture. People feel they are falling apart. Questions of form. Well, Steven Marcus did refer to this on social and cultural grounds, and it has to be reflected in social pathology. So we have a vogue in our culture around death, yes, but very little thought about the internal falling apart, the psychic death equivalents that seem to me to pervade our culture.

Kurt Eissler once said that Freud's great genius was not his conceptualization but his perception; what Eissler called his "microscope." And that of course was in the analytic method as well as Freud's mind. Well, it may be that we need new microscopes, we have to go elsewhere than the analytic couch to both make the intellectual breakthrough that's needed and to perceive some of these issues of threat and disintegration in our culture. I myself have tried to journey out toward holocaust, and I think that has something to do with everyday life as well, but there are other ways, and there wasn't too much talk about the connection of psychoanalysis with the great social dilemmas of our time in some more direct way.

I remember when I was a resident in the fifties, at the time of the psychoanalytic hegemony in our culture, what excited us was not so much the psychoanalytic profession, which never looked that glam-

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ourous to me—and I never did get too excited by those meetings at the institutes—but rather the ideas and what they said about things that were happening.

So it may be that we have to look more critically at the psychoanalytic paradigm, especially of instinct and defense, as we look at these cultural issues. And maybe that's the way to be most true to psychoanalysis; that is, to offer intellectually sterner stuff.

William Phillips: OK, Dr. Cooper.

Arnold Cooper: I'll speak very briefly to a few issues that I think run through the entire discussion. First, a comment on a remark of Mr. Phillips. He may be interested to know that the city of New York has already interested itself in the sexual welfare of its populace in questioning recently whether sex therapy should be reimbursed by Medicaid or whether it in fact constitutes merely the enhancement of life. So that kind of issue is with us.

But, more importantly, I'm impressed, and it's perhaps expectable in a meeting of this kind, that psychoanalysis is spoken of as entirely a cultural phenomenon and handmaiden of culture, and perhaps a leader of culture, and there has been really no mention of the fact that the psychoanalytic revolution began with what was essentially a scientific discovery with of course enormous cultural meanings. When psychoanalysis will again be as exciting as it was in that era will depend on whether it again makes profound scientific discoveries. And I think that that as a background puts psychoanalysis into an appropriate perspective with regard to culture. There's a limit as to how much psychoanalysis can be counted on to be the inspirer of intellectual activity or cultural ideas, and it cannot during every period of its own history provide the kind of leadership that it does during its periods of greatest discoveries. I'm not sure whether I'm saying quite the same thing as Dr. Lifton, but it does seem to me that this is a period of particularly interesting ferment in psychoanalysis, spurred in part by what's going on in neurosciences and infant observation, and a great many related fields that are not competitive with psychoanalysis and don't in any way threaten to defeat it, but enhance it enormously and have provided new opportunities for psychoanalytic research.

In line with that we do see today for the first time in many decades a kind of opening up of analytic theory, a willingness to try many new kinds of paradigms. That is the excitement currently in psychoanalysis which may again become a source of excitement for intellectuals generally. Thank you.

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Elsa Furst: One of the things that we're talking about here is, is psychoanalysis a bourgeois science, and, if so, what can we do about it. There's a kind of polarity which is coming out here. I'm not going to address what you call the opacity of money, which an awful lot of clinicians feel interferes . . . because of its opacity and their relationship with patients, but of another kind of opacity, and that's the opacity of science. Dr. Arlow, who represents a great deal that is most admirably traditional in psychoanalysis, concluded his talk by saying, "I tried to be as objective as possible as the facts allow." And he primarily said, "We are a normal science," as you called it, right?

Now, it seems to me that one of the mystifications or one of the things that can function as a mystification, inherent in the doctor-patient psychoanalytic relationships, is this claim that we are a science, that our task is the interpretation of the data into terms which are scientific. Lacan comes in here, and since William Phillips sent out a plea for someone to explain Lacan, I'll throw in a little bit. I don't think he's so much obscuranticist as it's a little hard to know which side he's on at any given point, and he's very committed to not being committed to definitions. It makes it very difficult and very maddening. Lacan is one of the many people concerned with issues of reality, the self; and meaning is socially defined. This is also going on in the psychoanalytic situation, and the main thing that's happening in the psychoanalytic situation is that two people are talking to each other and it's not that one has superior knowledge to translate what person A says into a higher form of discourse known as metapsychological theory.

I also want to bring in the whole question of the change of the type of pathology from good old-fashioned fainting hysterics to schizoid and narcissistic people who are, I would like to say in this audience, us, because there has been a certain amount of harassing of the schizoid-narcissistic personality in this community lately. I think the most interesting thing that's happening in psychoanalysis, and I think it is genuine, and alive, is the response to the question of how do we as therapists need to work differently with the people who are not presenting internal conflicts of the sort that psychoanalytic theory was based on. If you look at Lacan, at people entirely within the psychoanalytic framework, such as Kernberg, who are trying to deal with this issue in entirely orthodox terms, you'll find something alive happening. I think the question of whether we relate to our patients in a demystified way is actually being hashed over and looked at in terms of this question of how one relates to people for

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whom the question is "Are they real?" and, therefore, does one as an analyst have to behave in a real and nonmystified way.

William Phillips: Dr. Lowenfeld?

Henry Lowenfeld: I only want to emphasize a few things. There is no doubt that there is tremendous change in the neurosis. We have completely different patients, for instance, from the time . . . we came over in 1938, and at that time we still had more or less the same patients as we had before. Over the years, they changed more and more, although we still have some typical patients as in former times, but they are rarer. You may think it is much more difficult to analyze the current patients who are called narcissistic. I would call them people who never have solved the Oedipal complex and therefore they appear more narcissistic than those in whom the Oedipal complex is resolved, which leads to a real, more or less normal possibility of touching one's libido to persons and to issues. And the people whom we get very often are not able to do that.

I think analysis, analytic science, has to try to give a reason why so many young people take drugs. They never did before. Why do they do that? I think that they have a certain inability to love, and look for happiness in drugs. And I think that this is a problem that analysts should think about; but it's a problem that they don't even come to us because they know that we want the opposite of drugs, we want something that is reason. And we can see that some patients who have been on drugs for a long time are very difficult as patients, in the sense that we have great difficulty in being successful with them.

We might ask, why the problem of the Oedipal complex is so difficult? The fact is, it's a complete change in the relationship of the father to the child, and therefore we have an unresolved Oedipal complex. Then in adolescence they cannot really resolve it again as they used to do it.

One can say that there is a real change in our patients, and to a certain extent even in the therapy, because if we get some of these people, we too have to change. We have almost to try to establish something they have never learned, an ego and a superego. Some develop it by identification with their analysts; you can say these are changes; we never wanted them to identify too much with the analyst. Now it's the only thing that helps them. You can see it particularly in young girls. If they have a woman analyst who deviates a little bit from the original way of handling the transfer-

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ence they can be cured. But if not, they cannot be cured and analysis takes years and years and years.

So the whole thing is really that the first, let's say, forty years of analysis, the patient could adjust to a certain type of culture which you call bourgeois culture—but I must say I don't know any other culture. I don't know what you see now as a real culture. There's a changing, deteriorating culture, and so, analysis becomes very difficult. We can only say that we still have some patients who can be cured by analysis.

But, for instance, the constant acting out of sex makes analysis more difficult because in analysis there is always a bit of abstinence. These patients don't bring the whole libido into analysis; they go out, take drugs, or meet somebody and have sex. There is a real change, and I could talk for hours about it. It's a long-term problem, but I really think that the main problem is that the bourgeois culture or family is dissolving, and that means that the father wants to be a little brother and just wants to be loved by the boy: he identifies with the child and doesn't want the child to identify with him. Now, this has brought about a complete change in treatment. That's all I want to say.

William Phillips: Dr. Person.

Ethel Person: If you want to equate psychoanalytic theory with Freud and limit it to libido theory and structural theory, then I would think you would have to say it was dead. If you want to use psychoanalytic theory as an explanation totally of culture and society you would have to say it is dead. On the other hand, if you want to see psychoanalysis as a process in a formation of ideas in history, as opposed to a finished body of work, and if you want to see it as explaining a partial input into culture and society and individual behavior, then I think it is very much alive. I would say it is not in a period of normal science and it surprises me that people outside the analytic community, even among intellectuals, believe this to be true. I will simply mention object relations theory, theory of the self, and ego adaptation as implementing psychoanalytic theory, which makes it viable in a larger way, though certainly I think very few people could validly argue that it can be used as a total explanation. That's all I want to say.

William Phillips: Thank you. Norman Birnbaum is next.

Norman Birnbaum: I guess the first thing to say to the complaint that they don't make patients the way they used to in the old days is that they don't make analysts the way they used to either. But it seems to

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me that the discussion has veered between the analysis of a culture allegedly in disintegration or severe change and an intact body of psychoanalytic knowledge or wisdom which somehow fails to make contact with that culture. I wonder whether these are the correct terms of discussion. It seems to me that, in their very different ways, both Steve Marcus and Bob Lifton came closer to some of the difficulties that we face.

In the social sciences—it's a fact that after all these years of contact, interpenetration, discussion of the integration of the social sciences with psychoanalysis, most of the reception or utilization of psychoanalysis has been extremely shallow. It consists mostly of programmatic or very general statements, occasionally certain kinds of detailed observations which are available to anybody.

There has been very little utilization of the real core or theoretical structure of psychoanalysis in the analysis of social and historical phenomena. Dr. Person just mentioned some of the newer work, or newer preoccupations of the analysts. It would be very very difficult to find work on narcissism, the self, object relations theory or ego adaptation in the work of social scientists. And this poses, it seems to me, an interesting kind of theoretical and cultural problem. Namely, that the difficulty with the response of the social sciences to analysis probably has to do with the fact that in its origins analysis was both critical and historical; not a pure science but a critical and historical science with a broader political end in view, which was certainly Freud's end, namely the opening up of the possibility of a different kind of human nature and a different kind of society. This end is not shared by those who seek to use analysis as a closed system.

And, there are even two kinds of psycho-history: a kind of psycho-history that seeks to apply analysis as a fixed system to invariant or historical phenomena, and the kind of psycho-history done by another group, which some of us like to think we participate in, which is a study of the history of the psyche, which was in fact Freud's original intention, as much as he used the language of laboratory science or Darwinian theory.

It seems to me therefore that there is no sense in looking at these phenomena from the viewpoint of the recent past. The phrase "bourgeois society"[4] is not a political phrase but a historical phrase and the correct way to begin the new discussion of the relevance of psychoanalysis is, in fact, an effort to situate ourselves again historically, just as Freud was very well able to situate himself historically in his own period.

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William Phillips: Thank you. There are three more. Please announce yourselves.

Chris Beals: I had to do with training of psychiatric residents formerly at Einstein and now at Columbia, and it's about what's going on in psychiatry and its relationship to psychoanalysis that I want to talk and, particularly, to disagree with Dr. Arlow in some of the things that he finds going on in psychiatry.

First of all, although those storefront clinics that you feel have almost disappeared have been funded on a lower level, they're still thriving. One of the things they're necessary for is the treatment of chronic and acute psychosis in the community, and that is something which psychiatrists, particularly psychiatrists in training, are very much concerned with, and it doesn't seem to have much to do with psychoanalysis. This is the kind of split that I think we need to look at.

The second thing I want to say is that residents coming into residencies now are enormously excited about what they are learning; this is a fantastic time to be going into psychiatry. But the excitement is in the social sciences and biology. The curriculums are exploding and the excitement is enormous.

It certainly is true, as you suggested, that the nonmedical analysts of all kinds are essentially finding their clientele, both because of economics and because of the other large social shifts and changes in institutions that were mentioned earlier. But the question is what is happening to the psychiatrists. I would like to suggest that since the passing of the Mental Health Act in 1964, which made it profitable to do so, they are gradually and at long last turning their attention to the problems which had been crying out for their attention: the schizophrenias, the affective psychoses, and other conditions on the borderline of psychiatry and medicine. These are the conditions for which you need a doctor who can make a diagnosis, prescribe medication, order a social program, possibly including involuntary hospitalization. And the problem is, who are the psychiatrists who have been recruited to this crucial responsibility in our society? Well, if you look at those over forty, they are mostly a group of people who saw in psychoanalysis a chance to make an excellent living at a sedentary and reflective profession with long academic vacations and time off for writing a few papers about matters literary and philosophic. The delivery of services to very sick people was not what they had in mind, and, worse yet, it appears that psychoanalysis as theory or as therapy is less and less applicable to those problems.

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So, whereas psychoanalysis may have made psychiatry more subtle and more humane, it has as a way of life softened the sinews that it needs for the principal public challenge of psychiatry. And the training and practice of psychoanalysis over the years has diverted the energies of many brilliant doctors trained at public expense.

This history has been a fascinating one. It's been elegant and sometimes profound, but for the consumer I'm not sure it's been worth it; it appears to be changing just in time. That is one of the things that makes me proud to have been a part of it. Both psychoanalysis, it seems to me, and psychiatry are flexible American institutions, and I think they will survive separately. Thank you.

William Phillips: We've got two more. Let's have Barrett first and then Schneiderman.

William Barrett: I belong to the group who were interested twenty-five years ago passionately in psychoanalytic theory, and I expected something like that kind of discussion would go on tonight. We would be interested in asking: Was the theory true? What parts of it were true and in what ways and so on? Here we've been discussing statistics, sociology, economics, whether it's a booming profession. It's all very interesting . . . . But intellectually, I would have liked a different discussion.

William Phillips: We were trying to prove that the culture is in a state of decline.

Stuart Schneiderman: I'm going to be brief to finish this. You mentioned that you were interested in talking about Lacan to close things; I'm probably the only one here who is a member of his organization. But I think that what strikes me, having been trained in Paris, is that most of the phrases that are used to describe the situation of psychoanalysis in this country—and I cannot judge whether they are true or false or accurate or inaccurate—most of them do not pertain at all to what's happening in France. Most of the reasons given are also present in France; that is to say that the cultural causes for certain decline or crisis—most of these things exist in France. And yet the consequence has been an increase in interest in psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is taking the place of cultural leadership and innovation. The fact that there is a proliferation of psychoanalysts as well as a proliferation of patients—these are some of the things that are going on. I personally think that this has something to do with Lacan's teaching.

I think that, to close the discussion here, it's of some interest to compare what's happening in this country to what is happening in another country. Perhaps that might lead the discussion away from

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this comparison of statistics and figures and other things like that. (APPLAUSE)

Jacob Arlow: Well, I'll respond to some of the discussants and perhaps take the simplest ones to respond to first. For Dr. Beals, community psychiatry is in the interest of the community; there is no difference of opinion between us. The population segment treated at the community storefronts is not the population that would go to psychoanalysts, and I'm not down-playing the very useful social function which is filled by this work. I just mention that one of the elements which had to do with steering residents away perhaps from the study of psychoanalysis was this great shift of federal funding which was appealing to the young struggling resident for immediate security and for the ability to gratify certain social valuable and desirable goals.

One trend runs through all of this and that is about the revolutionary impact that psychoanalysis had in the past and whether it will have a similar experience in the future. Here I would agree with Dr. Cooper; you can't have permanent revolution, as the Gang of Four found out for themselves in China.

Dr. Lowenfeld serves as a point of departure for some of the issues, I think. I avoided any expertise in history or history of culture. It is not my field. There are important changes in the position of the family, the position of religion, and the attitude towards authority.

How do these changes come about? I think as psychoanalysts we can only make limited observations. The data or the insights we get from working with individuals do not give us any greater expertise than most other social scientists, and certainly less than those with better skills than ours and training along those lines. For example, why did the drug culture come about? Or if, indeed, there has been a change in the father-son relationship and the general patterning, how did that come about? I was interested in that subject a while back when I spoke about the role of mythology in organizing the integration of conscience and the superego in a particular culture, and I contrasted the guiding myths, let's say, in Greek society, where the superego and the conscience imperative or fear of authority was exemplified in the question of hubris, which was the great offense, and Prometheus was the Greek myth which demonstrated that. In the case of the Judaic culture, the story of Moses, a very similar kind of myth with a different kind of outcome; it was the identification of the love for the father which became the center of the structure of the

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conscience in the individual. Now, I would assume, as Dr. Lowenfeld suggested, that in these two cultures something had happened in the basic father-son relationship which was then formulated in this myth, which then in turn served to strengthen character structure in a certain way. But how did this change take place? As analysts we exceed our dimensions if we feel that we have a greater expertise in answering this question.

Dr. Salzinger spoke about the exclusiveness of psychoanalysts. That's true in an organizational sense. But it is not true in the sense of name-calling, when we speak of the inner problems of man. Essentially ours is a technical approach. Really what the psychoanalytic technique enables the analyst to do with any degree of expertise is to understand the nature of the individual's intra-psychic conflicts. The further you get away from that central area of controlled observation the less reliable are your results, and I think it was Mr. Birnbaum who spoke about the difficulties in psycho-history and some of the other fields.

Sometimes, when I hear some of my colleagues who venture into these other fields, I wince, because I realize what an expert in the other fields would be thinking about the limited background that one of my colleagues may be using. But then I hear people from other fields speaking about psychoanalysis and I wince for them. There has to be a meeting ground of shared experiences, and people have to be trained perhaps in more than one discipline; and this is one of the difficulties. But we have to understand the limitations of the analytic method; it is best in understanding intra-psychic conflicts. It gets less and less reliable the greater the distance, the greater the application out of the extrapolation of that area.

Just one more point, and that is about psychoanalysts. I have often said they are like the hysterical patients. They suffer from reminiscences and they are in a large sense the captives of their own history, and the history of exclusiveness, a kind of xenophobia which arose out of the original structure of analysis and later was exemplified in analysis as a movement, and which really has been institutionalized in the training procedures. That is one of the great difficulties in the field, and it has led from, shall we say, a political point of view, to the American Psychoanalytic Association making, I think, the wrong decision each time in regard to medicine, the community, the broadening of its approach, and so forth. We're well aware of these difficulties but I just want to say publically, they're true. Thank you.

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Joel Kovel: A great deal has been said about cultural decline and cultural analysis, and I was thinking, as these remarks were being made by a number of people, of something that Gibbon wrote about Byzantium. He said that the culture of Byzantium entered into a period of premature perpetual decay that lasted a thousand years, and I wonder whether we are also in for a thousand millennium of cultural decay. The cultural decay will last for a thousand years or until the culture is overthrown, as Byzantium was overthrown finally by the Turks in the fifteenth century. But we can't further our discussion by talking about culture as a force that is autonomous and moves in its own spheres; it's rather a force that is secondary to the main structures of society and, particularly, the class structures of society. I would take exception to what Steven Marcus said, that we are now in a period of decay whereas the 1930s were the period of pseudo-decay and pseudo-crisis. It was not a pseudo-crisis; the society came very close to a revolutionary transformation at that time, and it was interesting then that psychoanalysts who considered themselves orthodox and followers of Freud were not loathe or adverse to taking an ideological position in seeing psychoanalysis as linked to these potential changes in bourgeois society of a revolutionary nature. I am referring to, amongst others, no less a figure than Otto Fenichel, who is considered the pillar of psychoanalytic orthodoxy, who was nonetheless a committed Marxist and saw fit to bring psychoanalysis and Marxism together in a number of very trenchant and important papers.

The point behind all of this is that it is impossible to be nonideological, to say that one is simply interested in pure science and that psychoanalysis is a member of the natural sciences, because when you're doing that you're talking about creating the human object, the human subject within the objective sphere of nature science. Psychoanalysis arises from verbal discourse, an intrasubjective situation. Obviously it has its roots in nature, but to say that it is part of natural science, that it took place as an "isolated scientific rebellion," or revolution, is to miss the point that the ideology of science is a very definite ideology and has to be criticized like all others and that there really are no nonideological positions; there are only greater or lesser degrees of consciousness of one's ideological position. In my opinion, psychoanalysis is definitely dependent upon a free society. And it is my hope that any revolutionary theory could perceive that psychoanalysis would provide one of the measures of maintaining freedom within revolutionary theory; but there

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are a number of strata in revolutionary theory that tend towards authoritarianism and towards the destruction of a free society. It is very definitely the case that in a socialist society that may come psychoanalysis will still be needed, and it is in that sense that I hope it would remain the nucleus of a humanism that may yet happen, although it would be a Marxist humanism. Thank you.

William Phillips: All right, Steven . . .

Steven Marcus: Let me say that I think you misunderstood me altogether. I was not talking about society, I was talking about what the Depression looked like culturally and how it seemed that it was going to go on forever, and that only the war was what brought it to an end, so that there was a kind of pseudo-stability about that. I'm using the term with a certain amount of irony.

I won't really respond to these various remarks but comment on my sense of the whole. If there is a crisis, it seems from the discussion this evening very moderate, rather comfortable, and ambling along at a steady, very pleasant pace. Sort of like what goes on in psychoanalysts' offices sometimes. There are real developments and discoveries, nobody can deny that. I don't think that any of us expect psychoanalysis to go away, to disappear, to fail altogether. One does expect that this institution, which is a peculiar institution, to coin a phrase, will continue in one form or another, sustain itself at the fairly moderate level that it has been sustaining itself at now. And will continue to be part of the scientific, social-scientific, cultural picture of America and of the Western world.

That doesn't rule out discussion of what has happened to it and is happening to it; how it changed, and how it changed in the most complex way because it's situated in a culture which is itself phenomenally excessive in its, as it were, unconscious commitment to ceaseless change. It would seem to me that no institution, especially one such as psychoanalysis, locating itself in a culture of this historically peculiar kind, evolving in the unpredictable and unheard of ways that this culture and society are doing, cannot be profoundly affected structurally in terms of its theory, of itself as an institution by its mere existence and interest in society and its being part of such a society.

And it seems to me that this is the kind of discussion that one would like to see carried to further detail and to further ramifications.

William Phillips: Thank you. OK, I think the meeting is over.

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Kingsley Widmer

IN PRAISE OF WASTE: Some Reflections on Contemporary Culture

Waste now has a peculiar, perhaps a distinguishing, fascination for us. Ours may be not only a wasting culture, multiply characterized by a remarkable wastefulness which carries us beyond the portentous sense of Waste Land into something both more trivial and desperate, more aesthetic and institutional, but waste may have become the thing itself—The Waste Culture.

"My question to myself," said a wealthy woman whom I had sardonically questioned about her financial support of several cultural projects, "is not 'Am I wasting my money?' but 'Which is the best, the most amusing and curious, way of wasting?' . . . ." The publishing industry has developed a similar sense of humor. Apparently we have new genres, such as The Quick-Look Book, The Throw-Away Book, The Endlessly Replaceable Book, The Very Bad Book Which Must Be Treated Seriously for the Moment, among others. In the rising market of non-book books—volumes less written than accreted, or excreted, on near-random principles, such as guides to almost everything unimportant and plagiarized collections of selections of graffiti, debris and manias—are somewhat bookish devices for easy wasting. I admit a pang (probably a misplaced symptom of a more general malaise) at the first sight of a piece of mine reprinted in a collection with perforated pages. I suppose I had had the covert image of the indignant reader wasting my wisdom by hurling the book, like Luther's inkpot, not just peeling out the pages. A similar discomfort came with the boxed anthology of unfastened sheets which could be readily rearranged, curiously disarranged, or discarded. My friendly book-buyer wouldn't take that freebie—"How do I know it's *all* there?"—so I dumped it in the wastebasket, a gesture to say that it was at least *there.*

Perhaps there, too, belong such antique pieties as bookishness and the passion for qualitative distinctions. To understand contemporary book publishing one should not wastefully apply the categories of

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aesthetics or intellectual history, and the like, but those of, say, bottling. The stuff can better be handled if marked "Dispose of Carefully," "Recyclable," "Return for Deposit," etc. After all, packaging *is* the American art, our grandiloquent and wasteful aesthetic, whether in the form of plastic bags or philosophical bags. In its purest forms, such as the neatly designed joke-present of a "Box of Nothing" (clearly labeled "Empty," "Zilch," etc.), or Christo's "Running Fence" north of San Francisco in 1976 (which for something over a million dollars carefully, and dully, fenced nothing in or out), or the latest "critically acclaimed book" (any other specification might be as redundant as further description of the "Nothing" box)—these are pure art if art be pure waste, which these literally become in a trashing short time.

It would be obtuse not to admire the paradoxical qualities of the Waste Culture, such as its appearances of lavish variety yet containment within the package-to-garbage game, and its many ways of arriving at one imperative: Dispose of Properly. Waste stuff, of course, can be sanctified, as with the trash in the medicine man's bag, but only by shamanistic proximity, not by intrinsic quality. It may be wrong, then, to ask of a book whether or not it is "good," for anything other than to briefly package a careerist, a fashion, a cute notion. That would be rationalizing rather than shamanizing the rubbish.

In a waste-accelerating economy and a humanly wasteful social ordering, deep imperatives to cultural wasting should not be surprising. As with population growth, weaponry, bureaucracy, technocommunications dominance, and other forms of self-generating and self-perpetuating mad production, there finally may be no other end. However extravagant and depleting, the processes may have reached a mystic stage, a pure wastefulness, beyond any rationalization.

A historical part-paradigm might be suggested by the use of waste words in modern painting. The cubist of several generations ago, such as Braque, provided visual shock by inserting a fragment of newspaper in a still-life meditation, showing that discarded words were dead things which could be revisited as aesthetic patterns quite transcending the original stuff. The surreal collagist a generation later, say Schwitters or Miro, set off forms by inserting word-keys which mockingly broke up the sense of usual context and expectation. A step beyond that ambiguity came with more recent rubbish artists blowing the meaningless words of advertising and public sloganizing into monuments of waste-as-culture—achieving an antisensibility which de-transcends. To use rubbish—the fragment of newspaper, the disso-

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ciated word, the trash jargon—as the material of art may simultaneously give and deny significance. But when it dominates and any waste words will do, no words will really do. When anything goes, nothing goes except an indiscriminate mystical embrace. Waste, too, becomes absolute.

Our rubbish art says that our primary experience may be found in our refuse, rather than in ideal athletes or madonnas, for it is our dumps, and only our dumps, that we see as enduring. It may also suggest that awareness of wasting, rather than human proportion or transcendental hope, may be our deepest received knowledge. As John Morris ends a recent poem on mortality: "What lasts is waste."

Of course waste-as-art also reveals art-as-waste. Current educated commonplace emphasizes that our economy, our styles of producing and consuming and living—and, I would add, many of our institutions—become dominated by processes of waste. So our art mimics it, and becomes it. Contrary to backward capitalists and Marxists, our production-consumption systems seem increasingly pure in self-expansion, hardly confined to profits or service or justice. They go on for their own sake which, with the destruction of ecosystems, is considerably waste's sake. Our baroque normalization of wasted human as well as other energies becomes our meta-ethos. Properly, then, much of our art plays with waste—as material, as stylistic manner, as icon—producing the art-of-waste in what now appears to be the major aesthetic decorum of our time. Probably the falsely decorous art, the timorous and trite, merely fails to recognize its own wastage, evident often in an indignant and pretentious denial that it is mere waste.

Defensively in the Waste Culture, our redemptive activities, small as well as large, take on the wasting quality. We joggers, for example, run to get nowhere, pouring exertion and sweat with self-disciplined *élan* at the purity with which we waste out our wastes. Many of our more energetic forms of entertainment-distraction delight in wasting, from cars (Demolition Derbies) to egos (the "put-down" comedians). Few things can match in humorous absurdity the current jumble of historical cast-offs which constitutes most of our religiousity. And many of our artists seem to hold that by dumping enough—loose giganticism in painting, an endless inchoate flow of words, monumentalism in trivial packaging—that is, by wasting paint, words, purposes, and all responsive strategies, one increases the possibilities of aesthetic absolutism. Waste reaches towards heroic dimensions—buildings, landscapes, cities, the whole culture.

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Our visual art styles in recent years play with wasting: the self-destruct museum object; the disintegrating rubbish form and the accidental concretion; the pop permanentizing of the fatuously impermanent, which soon slides back into its unnatural origins; and the brilliant waste-economy of some "conceptual art" which declines actually to artifice anything. The final waste-art may create no waste by wastefully creating nothing. Word-culture has greater difficulties in reaching such finesse and absolute gesture. (Music achieves some of it in the totally noisy popular as well as the totally silent vanguardist, wasting our ears.) But literature approaches waste-purism in the "nonsense" orientation of some modernist poetics, in the self-parodying trivialization of forms, and in the absurdist contradicting out of meaning. This is not to mention the cruder examples of cut-up (Burroughs), cliched-down (Brautigan) and trashed-out (Barthelme) writings, or much redundant poeticizing of cast-offs (even unto Wright and Wright). What used to be called "expression" becomes largely the manipulation of left-overs and left-outs. The difficulties inherent in leaving out some variety of experience between the dirt of coming and the dirt of leaving are covered over by the waste materials of language. It may reveal an ultra-aesthetic of pure being, which may also be pure waste.

Certainly much of this waste aesthetic is not new, as the disdainful point out, which is also to admit that it is not a temporary aberration, as the disdainful fail to add. Some of the waste-arts' histories may be recognized in modernism, though the spiritual and moral metaphors of "waste land," and of shoring fragments against the ruin of the self, may have reversed their ironies. The laments and cultural nostalgia and traditionalism and literary debris may now seem the thing itself, the expressions of waste for its own sake. The fragments are less shored against ruin and despair than its bemused or defiant assertion. Anything else, any quest through it, would be a refusal of candor in a waste cosmos. Modernist negation and nihilism lose poetic shock and moral indignation when all seems waste.

But isn't that more generally true? A few years ago "waste him" became argot for murder, including officially ordered murder (recalling one of the minor Vietnam scandals). The tone of such wasting goes beyond mere murder—hardly new—to killing with little or no pretense at justification, not even the sanctifications of belief or hatred or other feeling. Life is to be gratuitously wasted, without much claim to wasteful purpose or significance. As with the ultimate thermonuclear

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war, we would match divine mania in reverse, creating nothing out of all reality. The sense of such final wasting may partly sanction the lesser wastefulnesses of culture—and reveal them as forms of exorcism.

Yet some of the waste-aesthetic cannot be understood as just decline and destruction. For waste-art may be a positive cathartic and homeopathic response to mortal wasting. And isn't *homo ludens'* cultural imperative often playful wasting? From some narrowly puritanic and utilitarian perspectives (which we may still be reacting against), any play with sensibility must be suspect, misused energies and foolishly disposable objects which could have been turned to more practical and righteous ways. Hedonistic views may also show culture as wasting, but delightfully so in the charmingly extravagant display and the potlatching game and the magnificent throw-away gesture. Art often makes waste feel heroic, not only in tragic nihilation but in comic garbage-scattering and anal explosiveness, or in sheer energetic effulgence of sensation, or in the prophetic overreach of the apocalyptic ending—the one complete plot. The most exalted as well as the most trivial arts—Shakespeare as well as nonsense verse—show exuberant discard and throw-away style. We probably cannot do without demons of the sewers under the altars, shaman trash, spirits as disposal machines, and gods making out of and into chaos. Some waste-makers always turn out to be culture heroes.

Ancient truism holds that art is long, so demanding and excessive as to waste the very life away. The anguished sense of wastefulness in artistic activity—the disproportionate pains of genius, the endless rigors of apprenticeship and connoisseurship, the expense of spirit, the suicidal poets—don't we often demand these metaphors of waste as guarantees of cultural authenticity? Thus to perceive much of culture as waste may be both narrow, unresponsive philistinism and a large, transcendentally tragic, awareness of the inevitable disproportions and debris of human aspiration.

In some such senses of loss and defeat and waste, we like to think we detect in past artfulness exceptional experiences and intensities and excellences. Yet it seems unlikely that we adequately rediscover or recreate these qualities within our current manias for collecting primitive and historic and near-contemporary art-junk and subliteratures, from grinding stones to comic books. The atavistic pathos of current art markets goes beyond commodity compulsions and inflationary economics. We may detect desperate imperatives to turn old wastes into new values, and new wastes into old ones, by frenziedly inflating the range of what can pass as cultural artifact and artistic

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commodity. Part of such current collecting may even be a revengeful rubbishizing of our time. Time can be artfully inverted by recasting the objects and feelings trapped in mere sequence. With instant aging and synthetic nostalgia, times's wasting can be reclaimed and revived—oldies but goodies, fantasy history, the decade rather than the century antique, the compacting of a cultural generation into a mere season. By such displacements, time loses some of its ominous seriality. The new and the old, the precious and the discarded, the accelerated culture and its accelerated waste, merge in timelessness, for the moment otherwise felt as wasted.

We approach a condition of instantaneous spiritualization and despiritualization, aestheticizing and deaestheticizing images and artifacts and styles with abandon, as surrogates for timelessness—a flip sanctity. In the speedup of our insatiable cultural processings, the replicable manners and recyclable responses and turned-on-and-off ecstasies may be glued and unglued from any particular artistic object and style. In culture, as with our appliances and clothes, the last stage of commodity fetishism floats free. Our cultural Sargasso Sea may be full but provides a transferable vortex.

The "museum without walls" and the pulp library and the quick-circuit sensation spread culture into a contradictory non culture of the disposable. The multiplication techniques have become indifferently detachable from the icons and styles and words. Conceptual art and enigmatic-parodistic literature show a frenzied juggler's skill at detaching and reattaching artistry. The ambitious artist might calculate that his odds would be better in producing rubbish which could be treated as art than in producing art that might soon be treated as rubbish.

In the rubbish of popular entertainment, a pervasive double-bind becomes characteristic—violent apathy, optimistic despair, overloaded emptiness—simultaneously demanding attention and indifference. We see other versions of it in the most concerned artistry. Currently, much of the traditional novel becomes mad rhetorical grotesquerie; traditional studio painting becomes freakish visual destruction—the painter as his own vandal in a vandalizing order (sometimes literally in the slashing of canvas, or the artist himself—Schwarzkogler). The novel posits yet violates orderly verisimilitude, the painting posits yet violates the worshipable icon. But such inversion to escape a waste-locus, even when doubled back into recent mock-traditionalism and neorealism, has its limits. When it becomes ornate enough, one no longer attempts to move through a labyrinth. Certainly our arts are further developments of modernism, which depended on reordering

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tradition by disorienting patterns and stylized incongruities. Part of that was a modulated shout for attention from the *retardataire* official order and the smug bourgeois audience, but it grew increasingly shrill to override the mass-industrial static. With modernism, much of the bind seemed to be external and overt. Now, with the arts postmodern for technocracy, the artistry double-binds itself, mocking the subjects and styles and roles it posits, or refuses to posit, fusing self-creation with self-destruction to leave only the waste processing. In Stewart Head's worn refrain, on his cancer, "we waste, therefore I am."

But we continue as a culture to waste away. Some of the case for special senses of wastefulness in the contemporary ethos rests on other, simpler, grounds than processed impermeability, the cultural garage sale, and art-in-and-as-rubbish—our reverse Midas touch. For pathetic example: We literature teachers in massive third-rate educational bureaucracies participate in one of the largest cultural processings of all time. We consider ourselves lucky indeed to find in a class of forty students a couple of appropriate ones and a handful of possible ones. (The passive-resentful majority can only be subjects for demagogism.) Whoever deserves the blame—we culture-imposers, those misplaced students, the farcical certification-custodial institutional functions, or the hypocritical counterfeiting and exploitative processing engendered by our social order—the schooling in culture is drastically wasteful. Those enduring it must deeply feel that culture is synonymous with waste.

Ah, well, it will be said, these must be the transitional costs of turning class into mass education (but wasn't that a generation ago?) or of lagging cultural conditioning (but isn't it always?) or of curmudgeonly intellectual despair (but who else can report?). Though much seems foolishness and fraud, we generously spend high to achieve our little and must cynically accept considerable intellectual and social debris. But what if the wasting—the encouraged intellectual mediocrity, the bureaucratic indoctrination and manipulation, the dulling and resenting and discarding—is the academic reality? Talent and intelligence and passion might appear anyway, and more clearly if not buried in educational rubble. Since such wastefulness is painful to contemplate we disguise it with ornate games and rhetoric and pretenses to give it the semblance of value. Thus we get *decorated waste*, as also in our arts—our desperate residual definition of high culture.

The hired learning, like our publishing and art marketing, and other institutional processing of culture, seems to have discovered its

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terrible wastefulness but is currently attempting homeopathic treatment. But hasn't institutionalized culture always been rather wasteful? Probably, though most of us can come up with examples in cultural history that, in comparison with ours, didn't look quite so wasteful quite so soon. Even so, much of what remains was more the result of historic accident and the arbitrary choices of the dominant than of more significant discriminations. Thus it seems dubious to insist on historical comparisons (an often facile gesture of modernism which now backlashes). Much also of what we have of a different time and place may inevitably be its waste, in literature as in archaeology. Yet even most skeptically using the past, it seems hard to ignore some sense of our peculiar processing as exceptional and as fitting Pound's "wastage as never before."

Perhaps, though, that should not lead to simple harsh judgments of our Waste Culture. For the big excreta may be essential to the healthy functioning of the American organism. Our high proportion of cultural waste may even be the surplus value, not only overhead and exploitation but expansion and opportunity for our higher meanings: intellectual freedom, semi-autonomous arts, democratic openness, pluralistic possibility, and busy markets. (This line is obviously dangerous, of course; carried far it ends in the placebo apologetics of such ersatz-Daniels as Boorstin and Bell.) Liberty is wasteful, we are reminded. In our junk is our diversity. If we make enough messes we may make something else as well. Exhausting all the possibilities of rubbish, like a Dostoyevskian character telling all possible lies, may be one way of getting the truth, even if we have some trouble in telling trash from truth afterwards. Intelligence and taste, to parody Montherlant, still have a role in telling the genuine junk from the fake junk.

The appeal of some such justifications of Waste Culture may depend, reasonably enough, on the fear of authoritarian ways of eliminating waste. Surely in politics, institutional as well as state, skeptical arguments—better rubbish than what *they* would put on our heads—reveal a protective wisdom. Personal liberty, as those who have been at the bottom of big bureaucracies know on their nerves, considerably depends on inefficiency and muddle. We can hide in the dirt, culturally as well as socially. As the world is, confusion and mess may be the last bastion of freedom, including the artistic. Historically, the best in civilization often seems more the result of the messes than of the masteries. Happiness may be postcivilized, life comfortably amidst the ruins after the relentless grandeur and glory have turned to waste.

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Perhaps, too, the crap fertilizes the true and the good, the chaos allows the creative comet to form and flash through, the wasteland provides the field for the unique bloom. . . .

But enough of such wasteful metaphors, for they also carry a tone of fancy-dress desperation and rhetorically sanitized despair. Something still seems wrong when we ask about the realities of autonomy and equity and diversity in the Waste Culture. The brave images of protective and fertilizing waste fade. As they should, for much of the praise of waste can only be defensive, muddled waste over authoritarian waste, careless rubbish as against imposed excrement. We may prudently choose to defend a particular muddle or mess—sloppy craftsmanship, garbage books, a stupid bureaucracy, our fatuous media, absurd schooling, fraudulent cultural markets—as a short-term strategy against worse possibilities. But such conditions are hardly sufficient or enduring and will, by their own nature, as an Aristotle might say, surely waste further away.

Sometimes wasting may be defensive, within a larger purpose; sometimes waste may be art, within a culture not overwhelmed by waste. With much time to waste, we have, as in no other time and place, turned our wasting into art-games. Take the monstrous pseudo-vocation of, and schooling in, "Creative Writing." This cultural industry provides a relatively harmless diversion as a substitute for more communal or rigorous or even dangerous concerns and so these days is used therapeutically in the ghettos of the young and sick and outcast and old. Well-taught, as a few such programs must be (though the "creativity" rhetoric confuses more honest craftsmanship), they may have some developmental usefulness, not least in necessary adolescent wasting around. Bureaucratization may be rather more at fault than literary and pedagogical theory in that "creative" courses, programs, degrees, jobs, etc., so often serve as rip-offs. Even so, institutionalized art-activities do some social services in, say, supporting writer-teachers, however mediocre most of them, and in providing disguised therapy for students, however confusing at times. It would probably be puritanic and utilitarian to ask for more economical, as well as honest and effective, ways of giving sinecures and psychiatry.

Often most expansive in the worst institutions, imitation-culture games raise genuine uncertainties about who is wasting what. Surely they have their utilities: a positive rhetoric for education-as-control and a "cooling-out" distraction and hobbyism. They usually indoctrinate a privateering ideology of culture as well as the latest waste-fashions. Even if something like Creative Writing does not provide a very good

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literary education, train in a true vocation, focus the most intelligent and perceptive discourse, produce much real creative writing, avoid the usual academic debasements, or, evidently, even create an audience for art and intelligence (we seem to have more would-be writers than actual serious readers), it has its place in the Waste Culture.

Those, unlike you and me, engaged in culture as secondary or peripheral activity may well be symptomatic. They pursue not pure wastefulness, leisure—that takes much courage—but compensation for rather mean and wasted lives in role-playing, diversion, fantasy solace. In this society, there is a distinctive wastefulness which goes with artistic effort. Most aspiring writers and artists and thinkers fail, intrinsically as well as in yearned-for roles. The failed athlete at least gets some exercise, and usually some companionable activity. The simpler craftsman either gets an object of some utility or can hardly avoid soon recognizing his inability to make it. Not so with the failed novelist or poet or painter or thinker, caught in this culture with insufficient reality tests and places, and usually knowing that recognition and other forms of success are mostly a hustle. Such wastefulness of human aspiration and effort, however lonely and frustrating and unjust and pathetic, yet provides much of our definition of cultural roles. And, I suspect, some of its sad wasting has turned back on itself, reenforcing Waste Culture.

The defiant separation of artistic modernism from much of society provided certain critical powers and an oppositional richness. Yet finally, as its legatees, we must view much of it as involuted romantic self-wasting and narcissism. Is our art still "spilt religion"? Apparently so, but not in a very adequate way, for we may suppose that religion provides rather more communion and community than our cultural activities with their human wastefulness. The current aggrandizements and fakeries and involuted debris provide poor surrogates for a better life, and not least so when dubiously mediated by educational bureaucracies and exploitative marketing into even more emphatic wastage.

One of the surviving values of modernism, I suggest in high admiration, is rage. Political rage, surely, as a role call of the great modernists' politics makes clear, but, perhaps more importantly for us, they carried a rage against culture itself. Has that rage against the inadequacy of culture led to yet more emphasis on waste in postmodernism? Undoubtedly. But most of those cultivated in the modernist heritages would find abhorrent any attempts to negate the Waste Culture in terms of some communal purposes—certainly one of the lessons of the sixties. In our time it has only been barbaric political

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militants whose prolegomenon for the improvement of culture proposes the end of the arts as primarily separate wasteful activities. But yet again the barbarians may have the future, and, in ways they don't well understand, the best of the argument. For to recognize waste beyond all coherence in contemporary culture—in its inequities and arbitrariness, in its gross processing and inappropriate institutionalization, in its technocratic subservience and destructiveness—seems to correspond with our other historical realities. Praise the simple truth: our Waste Culture is terribly wasteful.

But what would those barbarians have us do? Make creative writers write creative memos? Artists repaint the rubbish? We literary mandarins find more honorable employment? And people of sensibility sensitize the world we live in rather than the debris of privateering fantasy? To remove much of the processing and other wasting controls, to push art and intelligence into relatively unmediated relation to social purpose, would no doubt—as with real economic change—remove a spiraling cultural inflation at the price of a harsh cultural depression. And whatever it did for the rest of society, such cultural deflation would really be wasting us—the Saving Remnant—now wouldn't it?

Waste, I suggest, like Erasmus' Folly, should be seen in several different ways. But late in our cultural game, there is probably but one humanistic tone: apocalyptic irony. Yet there is also a clear, though hardly easy, moral: To look toward bringing the culture into less wasteful relation with society, with itself, with ourselves. Unfortunately, for those with fulsome faith in this society, that might be all too easy, with no wasteful ambiguities. But culture, I have argued, must never get too far from playing with and accepting waste. For those of us not at one with contemporary misorder, a more satisfactory relation of culture and society requires a vision of a radical reordering and, at present, a constant nagging critical sense, including exacerbated demands for less processed, less mediated, less disposable art and intelligence. No doubt, that, too, is self-wasting. But we are also of the Waste Culture and would not deny its sometimes exceptional intensities and other qualities whose finest imperative may be to take revenge on the society by perceiving much of it, truly, as waste.

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STORY

Paul West

THE BASEMENT OF KILIMANJARO

Medulla Oblongata: the nervous tissue at the bottom of the brain that controls respiration, circulation, and certain other bodily functions [New Latin, elongated marrow]

The sands of the Kizil Kum Desert look brown from the air, red when you are on the ground, and, presumably, black when you are underneath them in the political prisoners' quarters. Not far away is Samarkand, rebuilt by Tamerlane, four hours and fifty-five minutes by plane from Moscow, an oasis town in the fertile valley of the Zaravshan River. So much for that.

The sands of the Kizil Kum Desert are blown into the prisoners' cells, mixed with coal smoke, in order to produce chronic cases of pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis, the miner's lung disease, the point being that, when they tell you something such—as my guide, Handy Man, does while the TU-144 slow-thunders in a bank before levelling out into the approach—they are usually trying to distract you from something else. Consider, if you will, some of Handy Man's Intourist Xeno-protocol effusions, here much abbreviated by myself:

—One: Beneath us is a special agricultural project about which nothing is known in the West; its spurious designation, actually painted in bold capitals on a concreted piece of the desert, being TAUMATAWHAKA - TANGIHANGAKOAUAU - ATAMATEA-POKAI-WHENUAKITANATAHU, this being the Maori for "the place where Tamatea, the man with the big knee who slid, climbed, and swallowed mountains, known as the Land-Eater, played on his flute to the loved one." Camouflage, he adds, to baffle the Samarkandians who stray in this direction when hunting wildebeest or llama.

—Two: It has no climate.

—What hasn't?

—Oh, the project, the place it's in.

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—Three: It appears on no map, but can be referred to by citing the intersection of two lines, the one drawn from Ulan Bator to Taipei, the other from Seoul to Bangkok, which sets it firmly in the People's Republic of China, where of course it is not. But no matter, no one has any right to know where it is, just as no one has any right to expect that guide books should always be accurate.

So far, so obtuse. Worse follows.

—Four: American SR-71 reconnaissance jets, taking off from the Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa and streaking across the Chinese mainland at eighty thousand feet or higher, have actually photographed it as something it is not, it therefore being regarded as a secret installation worthy of a place on the Strategic Air Command's map of imperative targets.

No surprise to me: air forces have to do *something*, after all.

—Five: What is being manufactured there is, according to informed sources, *Strch prst skrz krk*, a Czech war gas which fatally gives the victim the sensation of having an enormous finger rammed down his throat. He then vomits up most of his intestines.

—Look here, I say to Handy Man: Don't give me that Intourist shit, give me the real shit. If I'm going to see this place, whose existence appears at best to be dubious, then kindly provide me with some noncriteria to eschew judging it by, lest I commit myself to some xenophobic nonjudgment.

—Dig, he smirks. It all depends, which is what the hanging man says to Damocles (we have universities in the U.S.S.R., whatever your counter-propaganda tells you, and our literature has wit). You must think of it in this way. Here, I'll draw it on the back of this envelope, thus attracting your attention to the address on the front, which of course is bogus. Let *i* stand for insider, *o* for outsider, you and I respectively, and *K* for the Kremlin, which is all sides. Now: first we have *i*'s view of *K* and *o*'s view of *K*. OK? Then we have *i*'s view of *o*'s view of *K* and, it follows quite naturally, *o*'s view of *i*'s view of *o*'s view of *K*, inevitably to be followed by what I will abbreviate as

K ---- (o --- (i --- (o --- K), which is all important, whereas what I will abbreviate as

o --- (K --- (o --- (i --- (o --- K)

is almost as unimportant as

i --- (K --- (o --- (i --- (o --- K).

Simple once you've mastered it. Another way of expressing this is as follows:

KoioK + or − oKoioK + iKoioK = Koiok.

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People expect too much, you see. Their heads flame with the names of the great enclosures of our collective culture—

Anayevo,
Ozerny,
Sel'khoz,
Lepley,
Sosnovka,
Lesnoy,
Vindrey,
Yavas,
Lesozavod,
Barashevo—

and of the diseases therein isolated—Kalnins, Sado, Galanskov, Ivanov, Ginzburg, Kapitsins, not to mention such complete recoveries as Babel and Pasternak, and such partial recoveries as Siniavsky and Solzhenitsyin—and they want to know everything, simply in order to rejoice over it. But KoioK precludes that, much as you would prevent your child from handling corrosive chemicals. There are limits. Now, as to the installation you are about to visit, bear in mind that KoioK wishes to protect you from what, in top circles, are known as Inaccuracy Generators, which means seeing something in such a way that you get a distorted idea of it. Unfortunately, our latest researches have conclusively proved that to perceive at all is to ill-perceive, a point made, I believe, by some of your eighteenth-century philosophers. Nonetheless, KoioK, which revisionism of the highest caliber is now redrafting as K-u, meaning K unperceived, would like you to visit with us, even though, in the interests of factuality, you are to see nothing at all.

My mind boggles. I tell him so:

I'm afraid I don't follow.

—No one ever does, it is so difficult to instill the peaks of metanoetics into the minds of the commons, if you will pardon the expression. What I have in mind is a tour, in the French sense that you will have a little stroll at the end of which, having perceived nothing, and therefore having misconstrued nothing, you will part from us on excellent terms and commend us to your own government for our prudence, recommending that they do likewise. In this way, the Unseen-by-itself #1 will be able to get on better with the Unseen-by-itself #2, neither of the Unseens having been seen by the other. This, surely, is how the myth of God has endured for so long: to be seen at all is to lose face, whereas to remain unseen is to win believers wholesale. I

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can see you follow. My own name, for example, Handy Man, is actually an allusion to *Homo habilis,* the earliest known man whose skull survives, who possessed the physiological capability of speech. Except, you see, in talking I say nothing at all. If I say *evitative,* I mean it both backwards and forwards, so that the sum total of what I am saying is, *evitativeevitative.* So too, when I say *interlaminations,* I mean anagramic *internationalism* as well.

—Intourist guide speak with forked tongue.

—How was that?

—Skip it, buddy-boy. We're on the ground.

He seems to think of all the things he could say, reviews them all, then dismisses them as too arbitrary; to this monolithic mandarin of near-aphasia, utterance unutterably corrupts. So I am doubly alone, sole tenant of the palindrome that reads O, not only the same back to front as front to back, but also top to bottom, bottom to top, from that side, from this, all right I *know* it looks oval, but it's supposed to be round and to roll.

So, it seems, I have discovered the wheel. Good.

All that is above ground is a small pumping station, into which we step, and here is a tiny elevator that takes us down in the pitch black. Am persuaded to walk forward after elevator halts; hear groans of effort, smell of tallow, the heat greater than upstairs in the desert of Kizil Kum, the wall surfaces bafflingly smooth.

All this with not so much as a word.

All this with not so much——.

All this with——.

All this.

A sudden pulmonary pain I refuse to heed, my hands have been planted on something hard and smooth, not metallic but warm. I move along, we all move along, my hands brush other hands and I apologize, but no one apologizes back, and I begin to develop the notion that this thing I am feeling at is infinitely long, extends all the way to the Arctic Circle. I marvel at the firm surface, smooth as a baby's bottom or some indefatigably polished apple, and estimate its height at about six feet, for I can feel the convexity begin to curl over at about five feet. The only sounds are of shuffling feet, breath pulled in and shot out, and what I can only describe as earth-tremors, as if the ground itself were giving and settling under the thing's weight. And, as I go, in a straight line as far as I can tell, I speculate wildly about what the thing is: it has neither cavities nor protuberances, varies not a jot in texture, never sounds hollow when I clap my open palm against it, and has no

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vibration. On the one hand, it might be a massive pipeline containing water or oil, water for the Samarkand canal system or oil for some secret missile base—no, not oil, but rocket fuel, heavy water, it might be anything: protein-impregnated mercury, molten diamonds, white-hot lava from the bowels of some eminent volcano. On the other hand, it might be quite solid, say an underground girdle round the earth, or the USSR at least, made of ivory or some other bone. Most of all, though, it feels organic, living, like the longest and thickest dildo in the world, something with which to pleasure the bottomless craters in the ocean floor. But, I ask myself, where is the point in that? Why the superheated secrecy, why the darkness, the palpable absence of words? It must be something of colossal ingenuity and eon-shaking force. Whoever designed it must have had some fun, mustn't he, and the prisoners who built it—assuming it *was* built—must have wondered at its purpose, presumably never having seen the thing either in part or in its entirety.

On we move, inching our way like pedestrians in some political allegory inch their way along the streets with faces to the walls, and time not so much passes as dissolves. Furtively, I lick the surface of the thing and the taste is waxy and this could just be the mother of all tallow candles, giant white obelisk horizontal beneath the red sands of the Kizil Kum, awaiting the call to action, when the lights go out all over the world and the Soviet Union has this, will light such a candle that all nations will thenceforward pay a dawn-tax. I try to bite a piece off, but there is no purchase for the teeth; they slip and skid. Stabbing with a finger is no good either, nor jabbing with the elbow nor even a powerful knee-thump. The thing is invulnerable, even to interpretation.

Where Handy Man is, I have no idea; he must be down here still, shuffling his way in company with the rest of us, his head no doubt bursting with all the things he dare not say, with his anticipation of all the questions I cannot even put to him, and with the latest authorized version of Unseen-by-itself #1:

—*Kak vy pazhevyetye*? Clumsy Russian for How're yuh doin'?

Unseen-by-itself #1 has no pronoun, having no noun.

Well then: Hi!

Is unaddressable.

But nonetheless addresses?

Nothing but silence, into which I now shout as loud as I can:

—*Trotsky*!

An unkempt-feeling hand squeezes itself aginst my mouth, one of

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the prisoners to be sure; the hand moves off, and all this time we have not paused, the distance travelled being possibly by now a hundred yards. Well, this is one way of walking to the Aral Sea, northwest of here, or to Tashkent and Samarkand, to the south, the neighboring desert to the west, the Kara-Kum, or to the Muyun-Kum, to the east. No matter, the thing no doubt bends at some point and restores us to the foot of the shaft, where I will be none the wiser, not even better informed. Trouble is, the human mind resists like madness the unverifiable object, is ill-equipped to accept the thing-in-itself; uneasy with quasars, dung-beetles and quartz, gets to work to fit them into systems, and it's to the system we've invented that we respond. Oh, Purpose, thy maw is gross, thy tentacles never quit, thy policies come at a low premium.

You think I was breaking down? Am? It's true. Handy Man is better at self-stifling than I, has rigors implanted in his brain such as I have never dreamed of, enzymes that restrict the amount of chemical transmitters available and help him to clam up. I, on the other hand, leap to interpretation like a bridegroom into the chamber; have already, let me confess it, summed up this giant underground proliferation as a giant squash, edible vegetable marrow, elongated against famine, analogous perhaps with the longest bread ever baked, 66 feet and one inch, by J.T. Gould in Ohakune, New Zealand, or the 34, 591-pound cheese made by the Wisconsin Cheese Foundation in 1964, or the 3,000-foot sausage concocted by thirty butchers in Scunthorpe, England. Thus the busy mind at its most pragmatic. That this thing, which I haven't even seen, can be useless, simply something to torment political prisoners with (and Cartesian-minded tourists), seems an intolerable idea, quite contrary to *nous*. I may have just encountered the first centrally-heated edible squash in human history; for all I know it may have buses running through its interior, glorious heraldic designs on its flanks, a *Cucurbitan* anthem all to itself fudged up by Dimitri Shostakovich, a symphony for squash and troglodytes. I don't care. I tread sideways on, as before, happy to obey now I know what it is that I'm touching as I go. And when, after another fifteen minutes or so, I find myself at a ladder, and am urged to mount it, and so climb up and over and down, and begin to sidestep on the return journey, I rejoice, having arrived at a positive conclusion in the absence of all, or almost all, evidence, and knowing that our mind is given us to be useful to us, not to leave us in the lurch.

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Norman Birnbaum

A NEW POLITICS FOR THE 80s?

Nothing makes many American political commentators quite so anxious as the view that in the next decade our politics will sharpen into an explicit conflict of left and right. Observers whose only method is extrapolation, historians whose notion of the past is the Eisenhower epoch, thinkers not quite able to grasp new ideas, most who presume to instruct us are themselves desperately seeking reassurance. They seem unable to stand the thought that the only way to preserve our society may be to change it. They do not tire of telling us what we already know, that matters are complex. They affirm complexity in principle, and in practice they deny it. Their determination to keep up with events prevents them from getting beneath them. It is surprising that persons who claim to disdain utopian thinking should be so resolute in pursuit of a utopia devoid of hope and passion alike—the view that things being what they are, they are unlikely to become much different. In any event, the view that the United States has entered an epoch of conservative consensus—however defined—is sustained by no coherent and large body of evidence. The very insistence with which the view is promulgated, indeed, suggests that political description of this sort is intended to promote the very condition it purports to describe.

No doubt, change in our society can be dangerous. The response to the Equal Rights Amendment suggests that large areas of our culture are brittle. If to these cultural conflicts we add an open effort to curb the power of large-scale capital, we can expect a general counter-attack, compounding and confusing issues. If enough anxiety is released, our ample national reserves of anger, avarice and murderous self-righteousness can be mobilized. The conservative argument for lowering expectations, for moving slowly, is plausible enough. Compared with many other peoples, we should be grateful that terror does not stalk all of our streets, that our strife is contained. One difficulty, however, is that our problems are not solved by either the consolations or the techniques of conservatism. A realistic pessimism about human-

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ity and society is never inappropriate, but recently it has been advanced rather too joyously. A vision of community in America has never been entirely secularized. Perhaps only a religious vision can sustain belief in the transcendence of the present sufficient to inspire tens of millions of Americans to think differently about our common future.

The new American conservatism, in any event, lacks the pathos of Burke or Burckhardt. It is, in fact, devoid of moral elegance—urging, with no visible reluctance, an intensification of the current structure of inequality. Asceticism, our new Calvinists seem to think, is good for everyone but themselves. Expenditures on public services, on the arts and education, which might show us to be a nation of heart and spirit, are deemed frivolous. The private sector, it is held, can be counted upon to maximize the public good—and interference with it must nearly always have deleterious consequences. What is surprising about these views is neither their appeal to a crude doctrine of self-interest, nor their revival of socioeconomic theories which events stubbornly refuse to verify. What is disturbing is that these notions are connected, although not by a systematic structure of argument, to a view of American history which is both static and self-congratulatory. Our history is urged upon us as a morality play, even as a sacred drama. It is a history which ends now, since it is improbable—even impossible—that it can be improved upon. The new conservatism is not like the old, a careful attempt to navigate the shoals of history's tempestuous sea. It is, instead, a charter for immobility.

Was it less than two decades ago that President John Kennedy, in an address at Yale, declared that our economic problems were now technical? The economists, these days, show a proper reticence about writing presidential speeches. Our economy was laboring even before the 1973 increase in the price of oil, that convenient (and false) explanation for a deepening crisis. A drastic contraction of our production has been averted by a gigantic increase in credit, especially consumer credit. That increase cannot continue indefinitely. Inflationary in effect, it imposes a growing burden of debt on a larger segment of the population, and must in the end sharpen the social antagonisms it is supposed to minimize. Meanwhile, our economy has become entrapped in a global system it once dominated. A third of our agricultural production, a sixth of our manufactured goods, go abroad. Internal prosperity (and a measure of social peace), despite our large domestic market, depend upon maintaining and increasing our share of world trade.

The West Europeans and the Japanese have plenty of difficulties

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on their own, but they no longer come to Washington as supplicants. The rise and fall of the dollar is a condensed statement of our entire global position (God may or may not be a structuralist, but He is almost certainly an international banker). When the United States was the dominant world power, American business used dollars to buy raw materials and factories abroad. The American multinational firms exported production and jobs (sometimes) repatriated profits. To make our exports competitive, we devalued the dollar, but that in turn increased the price of raw materials (above all, oil).

We could attempt to recoup, economically, on a world scale in one of two ways. The first would be to station forces, larger in number than ever before, in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Mideast—to ensure our access to raw materials and protect our allies. The economic cost might well increase inflation and decimate our productive resources still further. The political bill, at home and abroad, might be impossible to pay. The second would be to inform the West Europeans and the Japanese that we will no longer shield them, militarily. We would save enormous sums and cause them to divert resources from civil to military production. Suppose, however, that they negotiated a long-term agreement with the Soviet Union—and increased their competitive efficiency?

There is no easy or obvious solution to these dilemmas. The domestic economy is tied to an international one which is part of an unstable world military and political system. The Soviet bloc is also part of that system—is it not sixty billion dollars in debt to American and West European banks? Default could begin the ultimate crisis of capitalism—but in that case, where would the Soviet bloc purchase technology? No doubt, we could reduce our dependence on oil—by large-scale investment in public transport and by resettling our population in cities, emptying the suburbs. At any rate, it is clear that if we are to begin to master these problems, we shall have to develop a new kind of economic planning. If that is to be compatible with the maintenance of American democracy, we need the public control of production. The simplifications of those who think the market the highest stage in human social evolution begin to look very simple, indeed.

Simplifications abound. Henry Kissinger, as his power eroded, allowed himself a denunciation of our businessmen in terms he usually reserved for his critics. The businessmen, he complained, put trade before the national interest. Worse, they did not accept his definition of that interest. Now that the American members of the Trilateral

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Commission are the Carter Administration, we may recall that the Commission originally spoke for the more sophisticated elements in the American corporate elite. They disliked the bullying of Nixon, Kissinger and Connally—on the plausible grounds that those who have become appreciably thinner should refrain from throwing their weight around. Their new world strategy for the United States entails cooperation with the West Europeans and Japanese, accommodation with everyone else. After the fall of Vietnam, but before the Shah's defeat, the group led by Vance saw that we might with luck buy off a good many potential adversaries from the Brezhnev faction to Castro to an assortment of revolutionaries. We could hardly, any longer, count on extirpating them.

The current debate on foreign policy is a stupefying amalgam of contradictory analyses, systematic falsification, desperate idealism, and anxious rapacity. The real intentions and strength of the Soviet Union, the nature of the forces with which we must contend in an inchoate world, seem not to interest some of those who shout the loudest. Their primary concern is with our loss of national substance. The traditional advocates of American military supremacy, the Congressional Hawks and the Pentagon lobby, repeat the traditional arguments. One remembers Eisenhower's comment to the effect that the Joint Chiefs, if given the chance, would fortify the moon (contingency planning is, no doubt, in hand).

The Coalition for a Democratic Majority speaks for those who have made it virtually to the centers of American power. They are indeed allied with substantial segments of the American union movement, above all the Meany-Kirkland group in the AFL-CIO. This group is skeptical of the Trilateralists' economic *bona fides*, and to its credit, does not think that our national mission is exhausted by making the world safe for multinational American enterprise. The difficulty is that the program of this group appears to have been arrested in 1968. It is vigorous in defense of the interests of both union labor and ordinary Americans generally. It has no project for dealing with the altered world position of the American capitalism which it has so effectively defended—often enough against the short-sightedness of the capitalists themselves. The recourse to an aggressive foreign policy, in the circumstances, is beside the point. It will not solve the problems of inflation and unemployment, may even heighten some of them. Moreover, there are limits to the alliances the AFL-CIO can contract. John Connally speaks for the protectionist sectors of American industry, and has invoked racist imagery in commenting on trade negotia-

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tions with Japan. Connally is an impossible ally for the unions: he and his supporters are committed to breaking their power, as are many Republicans.

The public, not the ignorant and slothful colossus it is thought to be, has begun to question our institutions. Vietnam and Watergate, and possibly even the ideas of those intellectuals who do not suffer from ideological lockjaw, have had their effects. A pervasive and increasing distrust of the major institutions of our society—the corporations, government, the media, the professions (not sparing education)—can be read in the polling data of the past decades. The data also suggest that there is no rightward shift. Indeed, those who favor an American version of the welfare state and public regulation of the private sector have grown in numbers over the past two decades—and are actually a majority of the electorate. It is, however, an electorate which does not vote: our record of electoral participation is far lower than that of the other industrial democracies. (Sixty percent voted in the Kennedy-Nixon election of 1960, fifty-one percent voted in the Carter-Ford contest of 1976, and thirty-nine percent voted in the last Congressional elections. The Italian turnout in June, by contrast, was ninety percent.) Hobbes, come alive again, might think our present polity an exemplification of his *Bellum omnium contra omnes*: President against Congress, experts against the public, men against women, cities against the suburbs, skilled workers against the unskilled, union labor against the rest, the declining northeast against the rising southwest, black against white, cultural innovators against traditionalists, civil servants against taxpayers, export industry against domestic producers, large corporations against small business. Our common life is fragmented, and the separate elements of the nation are unable to coalesce in pursuit of a vanished idea of the public good. A good many of our social critics (and the press) are reduced to a nagging moralism. A large number of intellectuals have apparently not heard that as members of a "new class" they are supposed to propagate oppositional views. They limit themselves, instead, to serving those with money and power. Electoral abstention, in this situation, is also a political act. Is there an alternative in sight?

If an alternative vision of American society is to be developed as the common denominator of a new politics, a purely quantitative calculus will not do. If there is to be a new politics in the next decade, it will have to draw upon cultural resources which do not seem abundantly available. Perhaps, to be sure, we have a surfeit of conflicting values, no one structure of which can define our nation. The New Deal

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had a conception of our society which was integrative and not merely additive. The Progressive Alliance, and the restless elements in the Democratic Party and the critical sector of our politics, can draw upon revivified ideas of local autonomy, upon nascent efforts to redefine the public interest in a technological society, upon views of the organization of work critical of current conventions of discipline and hierarchy.

We still lack a new view of society, and a good many familiar American themes emerge in these notions: distrust of authority, localism, and the cultivation of self—even, alas, of the imperial self. It would be too easy to dismiss this set of concerns as a new version of what Leo Marx calls pastoralism. In their newer forms, they connect with a serious critique of the current social uses of knowledge.

Douglas Fraser, president of the United Auto Workers, William Winpisinger of the Machinists, and Jerry Wurf of the public service union, think that they must reactivate the larger political dimensions of American unionism. American corporations in Western Europe have to accept worker representation on their boards, and cannot shut factories at will—devastating entire localities and regions. Fraser, whose union has also campaigned strenuously for national health insurance, sees no reason why American companies should not be made to behave in such civilized fashion at home. Advances of this sort, however, would have to come in the context of a new general political program.

Is it impossible in the near future that we may see a strong American administration serious about stringent controls on the corporations, including systematic scrutiny of the mergers and take-overs by which they defend themselves against the working of the market? Imagine a legislative program that included the introduction of comprehensive national health insurance, and the intensification of environmental and occupational health controls. Consider, too, the possibility of transferring important aspects of energy policy to a public sector and large scale urban renewal. Add to this a thorough reform of our inefficient and unjust tax structure. A presidential candidate who advanced these ideas would certainly not be hostage to the view that our politics must drift irremediably to the right. If such a candidate could generate a modicum of enthusiasm, we might even conclude that the public was receptive to rather serious modifications in our system.

A program of this sort would entail the development of a comprehensive program for a new American global role, with less emphasis on vending arms to the southern hemisphere and more on social investment here. A consistent policy on human rights could use the Helsinki

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agreements to wage the only kind of warfare which might succeed in the Soviet bloc—serious pressure for more political autonomy for its population. The pursuit of agreements on the control of nuclear weapons and on arms reductions in Europe and elsewhere might make this sort of political pressure more effective, rather than less so.

As I write this in mid-June, Senator Kennedy has as yet to declare his candidacy, but he is running. I rather think he will win a narrow victory and become president. His program will need strong legislative support, and a good deal of organized pressure. In any event, Senator Kennedy is a skilled politician and not a new Manichean. He seems to think that these policies too are acceptable to the American public. A Kennedy presidency would not move our nation to the left in any mechanical way. It would generate expectations, and inflict disappointments, which could mobilize millions of voters, and tens of thousands of activists, who now feel that the White House is relatively inaccessible—or unable to aid them. A Kennedy presidency would represent something rather new; combining elements of standard Democratic Party coalition politics with newer programs and political techniques designed for an epoch of capitalist crisis. It would also call for a large amount of international cooperation on economic issues, and could bring the Democratic Party closer to the European Social Democrats and Socialists.

Millions of our fellow citizens would support profound institutional changes, if they felt these were consonant with their own rights and self-esteem. Thus far, alas, those who seek alterations in our society have failed to develop a new idea of an American democratic culture which would connect with a new politics. Whatever occurs in 1980, if a program is not initiated from the White House, it will be developed from below. That will call for patience—and the ability to sustain bitter enmity, quite possibly backed by the power of the state. In either case, a turbulent decade lies before us.

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M.H. Abrams

HOW TO DO THINGS WITH TEXTS

The Age of Criticism, which reached its zenith in the mid-decades of this century, has given way to the Age of Reading, and whereas the American new critics and European formalists of the Age of Criticism discovered the work-as-such, current literary theorists have discovered the reader-as-such. This reader, as everyone knows who has kept even cursorily in touch with the latest Paris fashions, is not the man he used to be. He is a wraith of his old self, stripped of everything human, as part of a systematic dehumanizing of all aspects of the traditional view about how a work of literature comes into being, what it is, how it is read, and what it means.

For purpose of comparison, let me sketch the salient and persistent features of the traditional, or humanistic paradigm of the writing and reading of literature. The writer is conceived, in Wordsworth's terms, as "a man speaking to men." Literature, in other words, is a transaction between a human author and his human reader. By his command of linguistic and literary possibilities, the author actualizes and records in words what he undertakes to signify of human beings and actions and about matters of human concern, addressing himself to those readers who are competent to understand what he has written. The reader sets himself to make out what the author has designed and signified, through putting into play a linguistic and literary expertise that he shares with the author. By approximating what the author undertook to signify the reader understands what the language of the work means.

In our Age of Reading, the first casualty in this literary transaction has been the author. To the noninitiate, it is bemusing to observe the complacency with which authors of recent books and essays announce their own demise. "It is about time," says Michel Foucault, "that criticism and philosophy acknowledged the disappearance or the death of the author." "As institution," according to Roland Barthes, "the

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author is dead: his civil status, his biographical person, have disappeared." The necrology extends to the human reader, and indeed to man himself, who is reduced to an illusion engendered by the play of language, or as Foucault puts it, to "a simple fold in our knowledge," destined to "disappear as soon as that knowledge has found a new form." In these new writings about reading, accordingly, the author deliquesces into writing-as-such and the reader into reading-as-such, and what writing-as-such effects and reading-as-such engages is not a work of literature but a text, writing, *écriture.* In its turn the text forfeits its status as a purposeful utterance about human beings and human concerns, and even its individuality, becoming simply an episode in an all-encompassing textuality—dissolved, as Edward Said has remarked, into "the communal sea of linguicity." Consonantly, the relations between authors which had traditionally been known as "influence" are depersonalized into "intertextuality," a reverberation between ownerless sequences of signs.

It might be expected that, evacuated of its humanity, reading-as-such would become an interplay of bloodless abstractions. Quite to the contrary. We find in French structuralist criticism and its American analogues that reading is a perilous adventure—not of a soul among masterpieces, but of the unsouled reading-process as it engages with the text-as-such. Persistently this inhuman encounter is figured in a rhetoric of extremity, as tense with the awareness of risk and crisis; anguished by doubts about its very possibility; meeting everywhere in the "*action du signifiant*" with violence, disruption, castration, mysterious disappearances, murder, self-destruction; or as overcome by vertigo as the ground falls away and leaves it suspended over an abyss of recessive meanings in a referential void. In this Gothic context of the horrors of reading it is a relief to come upon Roland Barthes's *The Pleasure of the Text,* with its seeming promise to revive the notion, as old as Aristotle and Horace, that the distinctive aim of a literary work is to give pleasure to its readers. But then we find in Barthes's account that the pleasure is not in the artful management of the human agents, interactions, and passions signified by the text, but in the engagement with the text-as-such, and that Barthes adapts the traditional concept to current connoisseurs of textuality by a running conceit, sustained by double entendres, in which textual pleasure is assimilated to sexual pleasure; the prime distinction is between the mere *plaisir* effected by a comfortably traditional text and the orgasmic rapture, *jouissance,* in the close encounter with a radical "modern" text which, by foiling the reader's expectations, "brings to a crisis his relations with language." It seems safe to predict that the innocent reader, seduced by Barthes's

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erotics of the text, who engages with a *nouveau roman* is in for a disappointment.

My concern, however, is with the strategy and the rhetorical tactics of structuralist criticism only as a background for considering three current writers who put forward radical new ways of reading texts. One, Jacques Derrida, is a French philosopher with an increasing following among American critics of literature; by pressing to an extreme the tendencies of structuralism, Derrida proposes a mode of reading which undermines not only the grounds of structuralism itself, but the possibility of understanding language as a medium of decidable meanings. The other two, Stanley Fish and Harold Bloom, are Americans who set their theories of reading in opposition to what they decry as the antihumanism of structuralist procedures. All three are erudite, formidable, and influential innovators who found their strategies of reading on an insight into a neglected aspect of what enters into the interpretation of a text. These theorists differ, we shall see, in essential respects, but they share important features which are distinctive of current radicalism in interpretation. In each, the theory doesn't undertake simply to explain how we in fact read, but to propagate a new way of reading that subverts accepted interpretations and replaces them with unexpected alternatives. Each theory eventuates in a radical scepticism about our ability to achieve a correct interpretation, proposing instead that reading should free itself from illusory linguistic constraints in order to become liberated, creative, producing the meanings that it makes rather than discovers. And all three theories are suicidal; for as the theorist is aware, his views are self-reflexive, in that his subversive process destroys the possibility that a reader can interpret correctly either the expression of his theory or the textual interpretations to which it is applied.

It is worth noting that such Newreading—by which I denote a principled procedure for replacing standard meanings by new meanings—is by no means recent, but had many precedents in Western hermeneutics. We find such a procedure, for example, in ancient Greek and Roman attempts to uncover the deep truths hidden within Homer's surface myths and fictions, and to moralize the immoral tales of Ovid; we find it also in the reinterpretations of the Old Testament by writers of the New Testament, as well as by Jewish Kabbalists; we find a similar procedure in medieval and later exegetes of the many-leveled allegorical meanings in the entire biblical canon. These old reinterpretive enterprises, however diverse, all manifest three procedural moments, or aspects: (1) The interpreter indicates that he understands the

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standard, or accepted meanings of a text or passage (called by biblical exegetes "the literal meaning"). (2) He replaces, or at least supplements, these standard meanings by new meanings. (3) He mediates between these two systems of signification by setting up a transformational calculus which serves to convert the old meanings into his new meanings. We can, I think, discern a parallel procedure in our current Newreaders. In considering their proposals, I shall ask the following questions. What sort of things does each Newreader undertake to do with texts? By what transformational devices does he manage to do these things? And then there is the general question: What is there about the way language functions that enables a Newreader to accomplish the surprising things he does with texts?

The Science of Nescience: Jacques Derrida

How is one to make entry into the theory of Jacques Derrida, the most elusive, equivocal, and studiously noncommittal of philosophical writers? I shall try to break through with a crashing generalization: As a philosopher of language, Derrida is an absolutist without absolutes.

Derrida proposes that both the Western use of language and philosophies of language are "logocentric"; that they are logocentric because essentially "phonocentric" (that is, giving priority and privilege to speech over writing); and that language is thereby permeated, explicitly and implicitly, by what, in a phrase from Heidegger, he calls "the metaphysics of presence." By "presence"—or in alternative terms, a "transcendental signified" or "ultimate referent"—he designates what I call an absolute; that is, a foundation outside the play of language itself which is immediately and simply present to us as something ultimate, terminal, self-certifying, and thus adequate to "center" the structure of the linguistic system and to guarantee the determinate meaning of an utterance within that system. The positing of some form of presence, it is suggested, is the expression of a desire—which is the motivating desire of metaphysics—to establish a conceptual replacement for the certainty about language and meaning provided by the myth in *Genesis* of language as originated and guaranteed by a divine, hence absolute, authority, or else by the theological view that language is certified by the omnipresence of the Logos. In a remarkable series of readings of diverse texts, philosophical and literary, Derrida subtly uncovers the presupposition that there is an absolute foundation for language, and displays the internal paradoxes and self-contradictions that are attendant upon such a presupposition.

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The quest for presence, then, is doomed to unsuccess, whether that supposed absolute is the presence of his meaning to the consciousness of the speaker at the instant of his utterance; or Platonic essences that underwrite the significations of verbal names; or a fixed and simple referent, "the thing itself," in the world "outside of language"; or Heidegger's "Being" as the ultimate ground of signification and understanding. But having, in the critical aspect of his reading of texts, dismantled the traditional absolutes, Derrida remains committed to absolutism; for he shares the presupposition of the views he deconstructs that to be determinately understandable, language requires an absolute foundation, and that, since there is no such ground, there is no stop to the play of undecidable meanings: "The absence of a transcendental signified extends the realm and the play of signification to infinity." In this aspect of his dealings with language, Derrida's writings present variations on a Nietzschean theme: Absolutes, though necessary, are dead, therefore free play is permitted.

It should be remarked, however, that the philosophy of language offers an alternative to the supposition that language requires an absolute foundation in order to be determinately meaningful. This alternative sets out from the observation that in practice language often works, that it gets its job done. We live a life in which we have assurance that we are able to mean what we say and know what we mean, and in which our auditors or readers show us by their verbal and actional responses whether or not they have understood us correctly. This alternative stance takes as its task not to explain away these workings of language, but to explain how it is that they happen, and in instances of failure, to inquire what it is that has gone wrong. A prominent recent exemplar of this stance is the *Philosophical Investigations* of Ludwig Wittgenstein. There are similarities between Wittgenstein's views of language and Derrida's, in the critical aspect of Derrida's reading of philosophical texts. Like Derrida, for example, Wittgenstein insists that it is not possible to use language to get outside "the limits of language"; he holds that the concept that language directly represents reality is simply "a picture that holds us captive"; he rejects the account of the meaning of an utterance in terms of the objects or processes to which its words refer, or as equivalent to the conscious state of the speaker of the utterance; and, in his own way, he too deconstructs the traditional absolutes, or "essences," of Western metaphysics. He also rejects as futile the quest for an ultimate foundation for language. Philosophy, he says, "can in the end only describe" the "actual use of language," for it "cannot give it any foundation"; in

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giving reasons for the working of language, "the spade turns" before we reach an ultimate reason. But Wittgenstein's stance is that language is "a practice" that occurs as part of a shared "form of life," and that this practice works; as he puts it, "this game is played." His *Investigations* are designed to get us to recognize when language works, and when it doesn't—"when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work"—to get us to understand how the slippage occurred.

Derrida of course acknowledges that language works, or as he puts it, that it "functions"—that we constantly perform what we take to be successful speech acts and successful instances of oral communication, and that a written text is *lisible*, "legible," that is, strikes us as having determinably specific meanings. But he accounts for this working as no more than "the *effects* of ideality, of signification, of meaning and of reference"—effects which are engendered by the play of differences within language itself; he then proceeds to "deconstruct" these effects by undertaking to show that, since they lack a ground in presence, their specificity of meaning is only a simulation. Derrida's procedure might be summarized as follows. He agrees that language works, then asks, "But is it possible that it really works?" He concludes that, lacking an ultimate ground, it is absolutely not possible that it works, hence that its working is only a seeming—that, in short, though texts may be legible, they are not intelligible, or determinately significant.

Of each of the traditional terms and distinctions used to analyze the working of language—terms such as "communication," "context," "intention," "meaning," and oppositions such as speech-writing, literal-metaphorical, nonfictional-fictional—Derrida requires not only that they be grounded in absolute presence, but also that they be certified by criteria of what he calls "ideal purity" and "ultimate rigor" if they are to be determinately used and understood. For example: in order to communicate "a determinate content, an identifiable meaning," each of these words must signify a concept "that is unique, univocal, rigorously controllable," and its contextual conditions of use must be "absolutely determinable" and "entirely certain"; while the utterance of a determinate speech act must be tied to "the pure singularity of the event." Of course such analytic words cannot meet these criteria of absolute fixity, purity, and singularity, nor can any words, for it is an essential condition of a language that a finite set of words, manageable in accordance with a finite set of regularities, be capable of generating an unlimited variety of utterances adaptable to an unlimited diversity of circumstances, purposes, and applications. But Derrida's all-or-none principle admits of no alternative: failing to

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meet absolute criteria which language cannot satisfy without ceasing to do its work, all spoken and written utterances, though they may give the "effect" of determinate significance, are deconstructable into semantic indeterminancy.

Derrida describes his "general strategy of deconstruction" as a mode of "double writing": it first "inverts" the hierarchy of the terms in standard philosophical oppositions such as speech-writing, signifier-signified, then it "displaces" what was the lower term in the hierarchy (or a derivative from that term) "outside the oppositions in which it was held." The latter move generates, in place of the standard terms used to analyze the workings of language, a set of new terms which, he says, are neither words nor concepts, neither signifiers nor signifieds. These invented pseudoterms, however, although "displaced" from their locus within the system of language, nonetheless are capable of producing "conceptual effects"; and these effects operate in two dimensions. On the one side, they account for the fact that texts are "legible," yielding the effects of seemingly determinable meanings. On the other side, they serve as what I have called a set of transformers, which Derrida employs to "disseminate" these effects into their deconstructed alternatives.

The chief transformer is *différance*—Saussure's key term "différence," twice-born and re-spelled with an "a"—which conflates "difference" and "deferment." In one aspect of its functioning, the "differences" among signs and among the conditions of their use explain how they generate their apparently specific significations; in its deconstructive aspect, it points to the fact that, since these significations can never come to rest in an absolute presence, their specification is deferred from substitute sign to substitute sign in a movement without end. Similarly with the other nonwords for nonentities with which Derrida replaces standard terms for dealing with language: in place of the spoken utterance or written text, the "general text" or "proto-writing"; in place of the word, "mark" or "grapheme"; in place of significance, "dissemination" or a large number of other "nicknames" that Derrida resourcefully coins, or else adapts to his equivocal purpose from common usage. All in their double function account for the legibility of a text at the same time that they "open" the apparent closure of the text "*en abyme*," into the abyss of an endless regress of ever-promised, never-delivered meaning.

Derrida emphasizes that to deconstruct is not to destroy; that his task is to "dismantle the metaphysical and rhetorical structures" operative in a text "not in order to reject or discard them, but to

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reconstitute them in another way"; that he puts into question the "search for the signified not to annul it, but to understand it within a system to which such a reading is blind." He can in fact be designated as, on principle, a double-dealer in language, working ambidextrously *with two semantic orders—the standard and the deconstructed.* He writes essays and books, and engages in symposia and in debates, that put forward his deconstructive strategy and exemplify it by deconstructing the texts of other writers. In this deconstruction of logocentric language he assumes the stance that this language works, that he can adequately understand what other speakers and writers mean, and that competent auditors and readers will adequately understand him. In this double process of construing in order to deconstrue he perforce adopts words from the logocentric system; but he does so, he tells us, only "provisionally," or *sous rature,* "under erasure." At times he reminds us of this pervasive procedure by writing a key word but crossing it out, leaving it "legible" yet "effaced"—an ingenious doublespeak, adapted from Heidegger, that enables him to eat his words yet use them too.

Derrida's double-dealing with texts is all-inclusive, for he is aware that his deconstructive reading is self-reflexive; that, although "exorbitant" in intention, it cannot in fact escape the orbit of the linguistic system it deconstructs. "Operating necessarily from the inside," as he says, "the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work." The invented nonwords which serve as his instruments of deconstruction not only are borrowed from language, but are immediately reappropriated into language in the process of their "iteration" (in Derrida's double sense of being "repeated" and therefore "other" than absolutely self-identical). And the deconstructive reading these instruments effect, he says, is a "production," but "does not leave the text. . . . And what we call production is necessarily a text, the system of a writing and a reading which we know is ordered by its own blind spot." Even as they are put to work on a text, accordingly, the deconstructive instruments deconstruct themselves, as well as the deconstructed translation of the original text which Derrida, as deconstructor, has no option except to write down as still another deconstructible text.

Derrida's critical lexicon, therefore, as Gayatri Spivak, his translator, has said, "is forever on the move." In the consciously vain endeavor to find a point outside the logocentric system on which to plant his deconstructive lever, he leaps from neologism to neologism, as each sinks beneath his feet *en abyme.* His deconstructive enterprise thus is a

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bootstrap operation, a deliberate exercise in ultimate futility, in a genre of writing he has almost single-handedly invented—the serious philosophy of the absurd. The most earnest and innovative passages in Derrida are those which, on the surface, seem at best playful and at worst embarrassingly arch—passages which deploy grotesque puns, distorted words, false etymologies, genital analogues, and sexual jokes; which insist on our attending to the shapes of printed letters, play endless tricks with Derrida's own name and with his written signature; or collocate wildly incongruous texts. In such passages—extended to the length of a nonbook in his *Glas*—Derrida is the Zen master of Western philosophy, undertaking to shock us out of our habitual linguistic categories in order to show what cannot be told without reappropriation into those categories: what it is to experience a text not as conveying significance, but as simply a chain of marks vibrating with the free and incessant play of *différance*.

Occasionally, however, Derrida ventures the attempt to tell what can't be told, that is, to make his deconstructive concepts, although "in intimate relationship to the machine whose deconstruction they permit," nonetheless "designate the crevice through which the yet unnameable glimmer beyond the closure can be glimpsed." This glimpse is of an apocalyptic new world which, he prophesies, will be effected by the total deconstruction of our logocentric language-world—"the ineluctable world of the future which proclaims itself at present, beyond the closure of knowledge," hence cannot be described but only "proclaimed, *presented*, as a sort of monstrosity."

To realize the inclusiveness of the new world thus proclaimed, we need to keep in mind what Derrida calls "the axial proposition" in *Of Grammatology*, his basic theoretical work: *Il n'y a pas d' hors-texte*, "there is no outside-the-text." Like all Derrida's key assertions, this sentence is multiple in significance. In one aspect, it says we can't get outside the written text we are reading—it is a closure in which both its seeming author and the people and objects to which the text seems to refer are merely "effects" engendered by the internal action of *différance*. In another aspect, it says that there is nothing in the world which is not itself a text, since we never experience a "thing itself," but only as it is interpreted. In this inclusive rendering, then, all the world's a text, and men and women merely readers—except that the readers, according to Derrida, as "subjects," "egos," "cogitos," are themselves effects which are engendered by an interpretation; so that in the process of undoing texts, we undo our textual selves. The apocalyptic glimpse, it would seem, is of a totally textual universe whose reading is a mode of

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intertextuality whereby a subject-vortex engages with an object-abyss in infinite regressions of deferred significations.

At the end of his essay "Structure, Sign and Play," Derrida hazards his most sustained endeavor in the vain attempt to put names to "the as yet unnameable which cannot announce itself except . . . under the formless form, mute, infant, and terrifying, of monstrosity." The annunciation is of "a world of signs without error, without truth, without origin, which is offered to an active interpretation," in which one "plays without security" in a game of "absolute chance, surrendering oneself to *genetic* indeterminancy, the *seminal* chanciness of the trace." Derrida suggests that we at least try to overcome our age-old nostalgia for security, with its hopeless dream of an absolute ground in "full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin and end of the play," and to assume instead toward this prophecy of deconstruction triumphant the nonchalance of the *Übermensch*, "the Nietzschean *affirmation*, the joyous affirmation of the freeplay of the world." If one cannot share the joy, one can at least acknowledge the vertigo effected by Derrida's vision, yet take some reassurance in the thought that, even in a sign-world of absolute indeterminacy, it will presumably still be possible to achieve the "effect" of telling a hawk from a handsaw, or the "effect," should the need arise, of identifying and warning a companion against an onrushing autobus.

Reading Between the Words: Stanley Fish

Of the deconstructive "interpretation of interpretation" Derrida remarks that it "attempts to pass beyond man and humanism." Stanley Fish represents his theory of reading as a ringing defense against "the dehumanization of meaning" in the "formalism" of current linguistics and stylistics, as well as in structuralist criticism, which raises "the implied antihumanism of other formalist ideologies to a principle." Such theory "is distinguished by what it does away with, and what it does away with are human beings." Fish himself undertakes to explain meaning by reference to "the specifically human activity of reading," proposing as his humanistic "point of departure the interpretive activity (experience) by virtue of which meanings occur." His model for interpretation is that of a reader who confronts the marks on a page and generates meanings by his informed responses to it. In the traditional humanistic view, it will be recalled, there is an author who records what he undertakes to signify, as well as a reader who undertakes to understand what the author has signified. In terms of this paradigm, Fish's rehumanization of reading is only a half-humanism,

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for it begins by diminishing, and ends by deleting, the part played by the author. In Fish's later writings, we shall see, the reader becomes the only begetter not only of the text's meanings, but also of the author as the intentional producer of a meaningful text.

Fish differs from other systematic Newreaders in that, instead of setting up a matrix of transformers—a set of revisionary terms—he proposes a "method" or "strategy" which is in fact a set of moves to be enacted by the reader in the process of construing a text. These moves are such as to yield meanings which are always surprising, and often antithetic to, what we have hitherto taken a text to mean. As the key to his method, he proposes that we replace our usual question while reading—"What does this sentence (or words, phrase, work) mean?"—by what he calls "the magic question," namely: "What does this sentence do?" The result of this magic question, if persistently applied by readers, is that it "transforms minds."

In all Fish's expositions of his method, however, "the key word," as he himself remarks, "is, of course, experience"; and what in fact works the transformative magic is his major premise, express and implied, "Reading is an experience." On the common assumption that the term "experience" can be predicated of any perception or process of which one is aware, this assertion seems self-evident, and innocent enough; it can, however, lead to dubious consequences when posed as the premise from which to draw philosophical conclusions. Take, for example, one of Fish's favorite sources of sentences to demonstrate his method of reading, Walter Pater's "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance.* In one virtuoso paragraph, Pater begins by casually positing that the perception of all "external objects" is an "experience," then dissolves the experience of each object "into a group of impressions," translates this into "the impression of the individual in his isolation," and reduces it "to a single sharp impression" in a fleeting moment, bearing traces of "moments gone by"; to this, he asserts, "what is real in our life fines itself down." From the premise that everything we perceive is our experience, Pater has taken us headlong down the metaphysical slope to his conclusion of a solipsism of the specious present—that one can validly assert reality only for one's single sense-impression in a fugitive "Now!" The example should make us wary about the consequences for interpretation that Fish deduces from his premise that reading is an experience, and what he proposes as its immediate corollary—that "the meaning of an utterance . . . is the experience—all of it."

One conclusion that Fish draws from this claim that meaning is all of a reader's experience (all the experience, as he qualifies it, of a

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"competent" or "informed" reader) is that, since the "response includes everything" and is a "total meaning experience," you can't make valid use of the traditional distinction between subject matter and style, "process and product (the how and the what)" in an utterance. Another and related conclusion is that you can't distinguish, within the totality of a declarative sentence, what is being asserted. He excerpts, for example, from Pater's "conclusion" to *The Renaissance:* "That clear perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours." In standard stylistic analysis, he says, this is "a simple declarative of the form X is Y." He then analyzes the experience of reading the sentence in accordance with the question, "What does it do?" and finds that "in fact it is not an assertion at all, although (the promise of) an assertion is one of its components. It is an experience; it occurs; it does something; . . . [and] what it does is what it means." Turn Fish's method of reading back upon his own writing (I find nothing in the method to prevent our doing so) and we get the interesting result that his assertion about Pater's sentence—"In fact it is not an assertion at all . . ."—is in fact not an assertion at all, but only an evolving experience effectuated in a reader.

I want to focus, however, on an important aspect of Fish's strategy for transforming accepted meanings. He supplements his basic equation of meaning with the reader's total response by proposing a start-stop-extrapolate method in reading:

> The basis of the method is a consideration of the *temporal* flow of the reading experience. . . . In an utterance of any length, there is a point at which the reader has taken in only the first word, and then the second, and then the third, and so on, and the report of what happens to the reader is always a report of what has happened *to that point.* (The report includes the reader's set toward future experiences, but not those experiences.)

What happens at each stopping point, then, is that the reader makes sense of the word or words he has so far read, in large part by surmising what will come next. These surmises may, in the text's sequel, turn out to have been right, but they will often turn out to have been wrong; if so, "the resulting mistakes are part of the experience provided by the author's language, and therefore part of its meaning." Thus "the notion of a mistake, at least as something to be avoided, disappears." And the point at which "the reader hazards interpretive closure" is independent of the "formal units" (such as syntactical phrases or clauses) or "physical features" (such as punctuation or verse lines) in

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the text written by the author; the method in fact creates what the reader takes to be formal features of the text, "because my model demands (the word is not too strong) perceptual closures and therefore locations at which they occur." In reading the sentence from Pater's *Renaissance,* for example, Fish hazards brief perceptual closures after each of the four opening words: "That clear perpetual outline . . ."

It is apparent that by Fish's start-stop strategy, a large part of a text's meaning consists of the false surmises that the reader generates in the temporal gaps between the words; and this part, it turns out, constitutes many of Fish's new readings. To cite one instance: Fish presents a three-line passage from Milton's *Lycidas* which describes one consequence of Lycidas's death:

> The willows and the hazel copses green
> Shall now no more be seen,
> Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.

Although, he tells us, it is "*merely* a coincidence" when a perceptual closure coincides with a formal unit or physical feature such as the end of a verse line, it happens in this instance that the reader's process of making sense "will involve the assumption (and therefore the creation) of a completed assertion after the word 'seen'" at the end of the second line; he will then hazard the interpretation that these trees, in sympathy with the death of Lycidas, "will wither and die (will no more be seen by anyone)." And though this interpretation will be undone "in the act of reading the next line," which reverses it by going on to say that they "will in fact be seen, but they will not be seen by Lycidas," the false surmise remains part of the text's meaning.

I recall a new reading of the closing couplet of *Lycidas* which William York Tindall of Columbia proposed to me many years ago. Tindall suggested the following perceptual closures (I cite the first edition of 1637):

> At last he rose, and twitch'd. His mantle blew.
> To morrow to fresh Woods, and Pastures new.

Those who know Bill Tindall may suspect he was not wholly serious in this proposal. Yet according to Fish's strategy, it is the way a first reader might hazard his perceptual closures. The thought that, even after subsequent correction, this misreading remains an element in the poem's meaning is to me disquieting.

I have myself tried, by way of experiment, to read in accordance

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with Fish's method. By stern self-discipline, I managed to read word by word and to impose frequent perceptual closures, resisting the compulsion to peek ahead in order to see how the phrases and clauses would work out in the total sentence. And instead of suspending judgment as to meaning until the semantic *Gestalt* was complete, I solicited my invention to anticipate possible meanings and actuated my will to fix on a single one of these possibilities. The result was indeed an evolving sequence of false surmises. I found, however, that the places where I chose to stop rarely coincided with the stopping-places of Stanley Fish, and that my false surmises rarely matched his, especially in the startling degree to which they diverged from what actually followed in the text. What am I to conclude? A possible conjecture is that Fish himself has not always resisted the impulse to peek ahead; that in fact many of his novel readings are not prospective, but retrospective; that in local instances they are the result of a predisposition to generate surprising meanings between the words; and that in large-scale instances, when he presents a new reading of a total literary work, they are the result of a predisposition to generate a system of surprising meanings of a coherent sort.

In his earlier writings, despite some wavering as to what is implied by his use of the term "method," Fish represented his analyses primarily as a description of what competent readers in fact do; its aim was simply to make "available to analytic consciousness the strategies readers perform, independently of whether or not they are aware of having performed them." In his recent theoretical writings, however, Fish asks us to take his method not as "descriptive" but "prescriptive"; its aim now is to persuade us to give up reading in our customary way and instead to "read in a new or different way." Fish's current views are an extreme form of methodological relativism, in which the initial choice of a method of reading is "arbitrary," and the particular method that the reader elects creates the text and meanings that he mistakenly thinks he finds. "Interpretive strategies" are procedures "not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions." "Formal units," and even "the 'facts' of grammar," are "always a function of the interpretive will one brings to bear; they are not 'in' the text." It turns out, indeed, that there is nothing either inside or outside the text except what our elected strategy brings into being, for "everyone is continually executing interpretive strategies and in that act constituting texts, intentions, speakers, and authors." Starting with the premise that the meaning is all of a reader's experience of a text, we have plunged down

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the metaphysical slope to the conclusion that each reader's optional strategy, by determining his responsive experience, creates everything but the marks on the page, including the author whose intentional verbal acts, we had mistakenly assumed, effectuate the text as meaningful discourse.

From this position Fish draws the consequence that, since all reading strategies are self-confirming, there is no "right reading" of any part of a text; there are only agreements among readers who belong to an "interpretive community" which happens to share the same strategy. And with his usual acumen, Fish acknowledges that the reading strategy he himself proposes is no less "arbitrary" in its adoption and therefore no less a "fiction" than alternative ways of reading; his justification for urging it upon us is that it is "a superior fiction." It is superior because it is "more coherent" in the relation of its practice to its principles, and because "it is also creative." Insistence on a "right reading" and "the real text" are

> the fictions of formalism, and as fictions they have the disadvantage of being confining. My fiction is liberating. It relieves me of the obligation to be right (a standard that simply drops out) and demands only that I be interesting (a standard that can be met without any reference at all to an illusory objectivity). Rather than restoring or recovering texts, I am in the business of making texts and of teaching others to make them by adding to their repertoire of strategies.

In these claims Fish does his own critical practice less than justice. Many of his close readings of literary texts effect in his readers a shock of recognition which is the sign that they are not merely interesting, but that they are right. In such readings, however, he escapes his own theory and reads as other competent readers do, only more expertly than many of us; his orientation to the actual process of reading serves in these instances to sensitize him to nuances effected by the author's choice and order of words that we have hitherto missed. And even when, in conformity with his stated strategy, Fish creates meanings by reading between the words, the new readings are often, as he claims, interesting. They are interesting because they are bravura critical performances by a learned, resourceful, and witty intelligence, and not least, because the new readings never entirely depart from implicit reliance on the old way of reading texts.

I remain unpersuaded, therefore, that the hermeneutic circle is inescapably, as Fish represents it, a vicious circle—a closed interplay between a reader's arbitrary strategy and his interpretive findings. I

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persist in the assurance that a competent reader of Milton, for example, develops an expertise in reading his sentences in adequate accordance both with Milton's linguistic usage and with the strategy of reading that Milton himself deployed, and assumed that his readers would deploy. This expertise is not an arbitrary strategy—though it remains continuously open to correction and refinement—for it has a sufficient warrant in evidence that we tacitly accumulate in a lifetime of speaking, writing, and reading English, of reading English literature, of reading Milton's contemporaries, and of reading Milton himself. Those who share this assurance set themselves to read Milton's text, not as pretext for a creative adventure in liberated interpretation, but in order to understand what it is that Milton meant, and meant us to understand. For our prepossession is that, no matter how interesting a critic's created text of Milton may be, it will be less interesting than the text that Milton himself wrote for his fit readers though few.

The Scene of Literature: Harold Bloom

Harold Bloom's theory of reading and writing literature centers on the area that Derrida and the structuralists call "intertextuality." Bloom, however, employs the traditional term "influence," and presents his theory in opposition against "the anti-humanistic plain dreariness of all those developments in European criticism that have yet to demonstrate that they can aid in reading any one poem by any poet whatsoever." "Poems," he affirms, "are written by men"; and against "the partisans of *writing* . . . like Derrida and Foucault who imply . . . that language by itself writes the poem and thinks," he insists that only "the human writes, the human thinks." Unlike Stanley Fish, then, Bloom restores the human writer as well as reader to an effective role in the literary transaction. But if Fish's theory is a half-humanism, Bloom's is all-too-human, for it screens out from both the writing and reading of "strong" literature all motives except self-concern and all compunction about giving free rein to one's will to power:

> . . . the living labyrinth of literature is built upon the ruin of every impulse most generous in us. So apparently it is and must be—we are wrong to have founded a humanism directly upon literature itself, and the phrase "humane letters" is an oxymoron. . . . The strong imagination comes to its painful birth through savagery and misrepresentation.

Like many recent critics, Bloom posits a great divide in literary

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history and locates it in the seventeenth century; his innovation is to account for this division as the change from the relative creative nonchalance of a Homer, Dante, or Shakespeare in "the giant age before the flood" to the acute anxiety of influence suffered by all but a very few poets since the Enlightenment. A modern, and therefore "belated," poet awakens to his calling when irresistibly seized upon by one or more poems of a precursor or father-poet, yet experiences that seizure as an intolerable incursion into his imaginative life-space. The response of the belated writer is to defend himself against the parent-poem by distorting it drastically in the process of reading it; but he cannot escape the precursor, for he inevitably embodies its distorted form into his own attempt at an absolutely original poem.

Bloom's theory, as he points out, is a revision for literary criticism of what Freud sardonically called "the Family Romance." The relation of reader and poet to his parent-precursor, as in Freud's Oedipal relationship, is ambivalent, compounded of love and hate; but in Bloom's detailed descriptions of reading and writing, love enters only to weaken the result of the process, while the aspect of hate, jealousy, and fear is alone given a systematic and creative role to perform. This role is to deploy, with unconscious cunning, a set of defensive tactics, "the revisionary ratios," which are in fact aggressive acts designed to "malform" the precursor in the attempt to disestablish its "priority" over the latecomer, both in time and in creative strength. "Every act of reading is . . . defensive, and as defense it makes of interpretation a necessary misprision. . . . Reading is therefore misprision—or misreading." And since "every poem is a misinterpretation of a parent poem," he concludes that "the meaning of a poem can only be another poem." "There are no right readings"; the sole alternative is between "weak mis-readings and strong mis-readings." A weak misreading attempts, although unavailingly, to get at what a text really means in itself; it is the product of an inhibiting timidity, or at best of an excess of "generosity" toward the parent-poet. A misreading is strong, hence creative and valuable, in proportion to the boldness with which the reader's emotional compulsions are licensed to do violence to the text that he strives to overcome.

It is sometimes argued against Bloom's theory that his claim, "all reading is misreading," is incoherent, on the ground that we cannot know that a text has been misread unless we know what it is to read it correctly. This argument overlooks an interesting feature of Bloom's theory, that is, its quasi-Kantian frame of reference. At times Bloom's idiom corresponds closely enough to Kant's to qualify, in Bloom's

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terms, as a "deliberate misprision" of Kant's epistemology. Terms which recur on almost every page in which Bloom discusses misreading are "necessity," "necessary," "necessarily," "must be." Such terms are to be taken seriously; they signify an *a priori* necessity. In Bloom's theory, that is, the compulsive revisionary ratios through which we experience a poem correspond, in Kant's philosophy, to the cognitive forms of space, time, and the categories that the mind inescapably imposes on all its experience of the world. Consequently Bloom's reader can only know the phenomenal poem constituted by his own revisionary categories; he cannot possibly get outside these categories to know the noumenal *Ding an sich*, or what Bloom calls "the poem-in-itself" or the "poem-as-such."

But Bloom's aim, he says, is not simply to propose "another new poetics," but to establish and convert us to "a newer and starker way of reading poems." The product of this new way of reading is "an antithetical practical criticism, as opposed to all the primary criticisms now in vogue."

> Let us give up the failed enterprise of seeking to "understand" any single poem as an entity in itself. Let us pursue instead the quest of learning to read any poem as its poet's deliberate misinterpretation, *as a poet*, of a precursor poem or of poetry in general.

Bloom therefore, like Derrida and Fish, proposes a way of reading a text that will displace the meanings that "primary," or traditional readers have hitherto found in it. As applied in his reading, Bloom's revisionary ratios in effect function as an inventory of transformers for translating accepted meanings into new meanings; he conveniently presents a one-page table of his transformers which he calls "The Map of Misprision." And such is the virtuosity of these devices that they cannot fail to effect Bloom's antithetic meanings; in his own repeated assertion, "It must be so."

In this analysis I deliberately enact the role which Bloom, in a phrase from Blake, calls "the Idiot Questioner," whose presence as an aspect of his own mind Bloom recognizes but sternly represses. (In the present instance "the Idiot Questioner" can be translated as a stolid inquirer into the credentials of a critic's interpretive procedures.) Pursuing such an inquiry, I note that Bloom, in his tetralogy of books on the theory and practice of antithetic criticism, sets up six revisionary ratios which he names "clinamen," "tessera," "kenosis," and so on. He goes on to assimilate each of these ratios to a variety of other reinterpretive devices—to a Freudian defense-mechanism; to a concept of the

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Hebrew Kabbalists; to one of the rhetorical tropes such as synecdoche, hyperbole, metaphor; and to a recurrent type of poetic imagery. These amalgamated transformers are not only versatile enough to establish each of Bloom's new readings, but also antithetical enough to convert any possible counter-evidence into a confirmation of his own reading.

Take, for example, the Freudian mechanisms of defense—which Bloom calls "the clearest analogues I have found for the revisionary ratios"—as he applies them to interpret any poem as a distorted version of a precursor-poem. If the belated poem patently echoes the parent-poem, that counts as evidence for the new reading; although, Bloom asserts, "only weak poems, or the weaker elements in strong poems, immediately echo precursor poems, or the weaker elements in strong poems, immediately echo precursor poems, or directly allude to them." If the later poem doesn't contain such "verbal reminders," that counts too, on the basis of the mechanism of repression—the belated poet's anxiety of influence has been strong enough to repress all reference to his predecessor. And if the belated poem differs radically from its proposed precursor, that counts even more decisively, on the basis of the mechanism of "reaction-formation"—the poet's anxiety was so intense as to distort the precursor into its seeming opposite. This power of the negative to turn itself into a stronger positive manifests itself frequently in Bloom's applied criticism. For example, the opening verse paragraph of Tennyson's *Tithonus* has traditionally been read as expressing the aged but immortal protagonist's longing for death. Bloom, however, reads it antithetically as a revision, or

> swerve away from the naturalistic affirmations of Wordsworth and of Keats. What is absent in these opening lines is simply all of nature; what is present is the withered Tithonus. As Tennyson's reaction-formation against his precursors' stance, these lines are a rhetorical irony, denying what they desire, the divination of a poetic survival into strength.

Perhaps so; but it will be noted that the reaction-transformer charters the antithetic critic to speak without fear of contradition, while stranding his Questioner in a no-win position.

Bloom's theory, like that of other Newreaders, is self-referential, for he does not exempt his own interpretations from the assertion that all readings are misreadings. In his recent books on Yeats and Stevens, he often writes brilliant critiques that compel assent from a "primary" critic like myself. The extent of Bloom's own claim for these readings, however, is that they are strong misreadings, in that they do violence to the texts they address, by virtue of his surrender to his need for

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autonomy and to his anxieties of the influence exerted on him by his critical precursors. And in lieu of any possible criterion of rightness, such readings can be valuable only to the degree that they are "creative or interesting misreadings." By their strength, he says, such readings will provoke his critical successors to react by their own defensive misreadings, and so take their place within the unending accumulation of misreadings of misreadings that constitute the history both of poetry and of criticism, at least since the Enlightenment.

While acknowledging that his theory "may ask to be judged, as argument," Bloom also insists that "a theory *of* poetry must belong *to* poetry, must *be* poetry" and presents his work as "one reader's critical vision" bodied forth in "a severe poem." Let me drop my role as Idiot Questioner of Bloom's evidential procedures to read him in this alternative way, as a prose-poet who expresses a founding vision of the Scene of Literature. In the main, this has been traditionally conceived as a republic of equals composed, in Wordsworth's phrase, of "the mighty living and the mighty dead" whose poetry, as Shelley said, "is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." In Bloom's bleak re-vision, the Scene of Literature becomes the arena of a savage war for *Lebensraum* waged by the living poet against the oppressive and ever-present dead—a parricidal war, in which each newcomer, in his need to be self-begotten and self-sufficient, undertakes with unconscious cunning to mutilate, murder, and devour his poetic father. The poet's prime compulsions are like those of the Freudian Id, which demands no less than everything at once and is incapable of recognizing any constraints on its satisfactions by moral compunction, logical incompatibility, or empirical impossibility. And the poetic self remains forever fixed at the Oedipal stage of development; for Bloom explicitly denies to the poet "as poet" the Freudian mechanism of sublimation, which allows for the substitution, in satisfying our primordial desires, of higher for lower goals and so makes possible the growth from the infantile stage of total self-concern to the mature recognition of reciprocity with other selves. The war of which each poem is a battleground is ultimately futile, not only because every poet is inescapably fathered by precursors but also because, according to Bloom, his will to priority over his precursors is, in deep psychic fact, a defense against acknowledging his own human mortality. The conflict, furthermore, is doomed to terminate in the death of poetry itself, for the population of strong poets will soon usurp so much of the available living-space that even the illusion of creative originality will no longer be possible.

In Bloom's own idiom of rhetorical tropes, one can say of his

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critical poem about poetry that it is a sustained synecdoche which puts a part for the whole. By this device, and by his subsidiary device of strong hyperbole, Bloom compels us to face up to aspects of the motivation to write and misread poems—self-assertiveness, lust for power and precedence, malice, envy, revenge—which canonical critics have largely ignored. To those of us who yield ourselves to Bloom's dark and powerful eloquence, the Scene of Literature will never look the same again; such a result is probably the most that any writer compelled by an antithetical vision can hope to achieve. But the part is not the whole. What Bloom's point of vantage cannot take into account is the great diversity of motives for writing poetry, and in the products of that writing, the abundance of subject-matters, characters, genres, and styles, and the range of the passions expressed and represented, from brutality and terror and anguish, indeed, to gaiety, joy, and sometimes sheer fun. In sum, what Bloom's tragic vision of the literary scene systematically omits is almost everything that has hitherto been recognized to constitute the realm of literature.

On Bloom's critical premises, I am of course open to the retort that I have misread both his criticism and our heritage of literary texts. But knowing from experience Bloom's geniality to his own critical precursors, I am confident that he will attribute my misreading to an amiable weakness—to my fallacy, that is, of misplaced benevolence.

Newreading and Old Norms

I shall conclude by considering briefly my third question: What makes a text so vulnerable to the diverse things that Newreaders do with it? The chief reason is that our use and understanding of language is not a science but a practice. That is, what we call "knowing a language" is not a matter of knowing that or knowing why, but of knowing how, of having acquired a skill. We are born into a community of speakers and writers who have already acquired this skill, and we in turn acquire it by interplay with these others, in which we learn how to say what we mean and how to understand what others have said by a continuous process of self-correction and refinement, based on what are often very subtle indications of when and in what way we have gone wrong.

The successful practice of language depends on our mastery of linguistic uniformities that we call conventions, or norms, or rules. Linguistic rules, however, differ radically from the rules of chess or of a card-game to which they are often compared. The rules which constitute these games are stipulated in an authoritative code to which we

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can refer in order to resolve disputes. The use and understanding of language, on the other hand, depends on tacit consensual regularities which are multiplex and fluid; except in very gross ways, these regularities are uncodified, and probably uncodifiable. In our practice, therefore, we must rely not on rules, but on linguistic tact—a tact which is the emergent result of all our previous experience with speaking, hearing, writing, and reading the language.

Stanley Fish seems to me right in his claim that the linguistic meanings we find in a text are relative to the interpretive strategy we employ, and that agreement about meanings depends on membership in a community which shares an interpretive strategy. But if we set out not to create meanings, but to understand what the sequence of sentences in a literary work mean, then we have no choice except to read according to the linguistic strategy the author of the work employed, and expected us to employ. We are capable of doing so, because an immense store of cumulative evidence provides assurance that the authors of literary texts belonged to the linguistic community into which we were later born, and so shared our skill, and the consensual regularities on which that skill depends, with some divergencies—which we have a variety of clues for detecting—which are the result both of the slow change of communal regularities in time and of the limited innovations which can be introduced by the individual author.

When a Newreader, on the basis of his contrived interpretive strategy, asserts that a passage means something radically different from what it has been taken to mean, or else that it means nothing in particular, we lack codified criteria to which we can appeal against the new interpretation; in the last analysis, we can only appeal to our linguistic tact, as supported by the agreement of readers who share that tact. But such an appeal has no probative weight for a reader who has opted out of playing the game of language according to its constitutive regularities; nor is the application of our own inherited practice verifiable by any proof outside its sustainedly coherent working. All we can do is to point out to the Newreader what he already knows—that he is playing a double game, introducing his own interpretive strategy when reading someone else's text, but tacitly relying on communal norms when undertaking to communicate the methods and results of his interpretations to his own readers.

We can't claim that the Newreader's strategy doesn't work, for each of these ways of doing things to texts indubitably works. Allowed his own premises and conversion procedures, Derrida is able to deconstruct any text into a suspension of numberless undecidable significations,

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Fish can make it the occasion for a creative adventure in false surmises, and Bloom can read it as a perverse distortion of any chosen precursor-text. These substitute strategies in fact have an advantage which is a principal cause of their appeal to students of literature. Our inherited strategy, although it has shown that it can persistently discover new meanings even in a classic text, must operate always under the constraint of communal regularities of usage. Each new strategy, on the other hand, is a discovery procedure which guarantees new meanings. It thus provides freshness of sensation in reading old and familiar texts—at least until we learn to anticipate the limited kind of new meanings it is capable of generating; it also makes it easy for any critical follower to say new and exciting things about a literary work that has been again and again discussed. But we purchase this advantage at a cost, and ultimately the choice between a radical Newreading and the old way of reading is a matter of cultural cost-accounting. We gain a guaranteed novelty, of a kind that makes any text directly relevant to current interests and concerns. What we lose is access to the inexhaustible variety of literature as determinably meaningful texts by, for, and about human beings, as well as access to the enlightening things that have been written about such texts by the humanists and critics who were our precursors, from Aristotle to Lionel Trilling.

Note: Quotations from works which are not named in the text are from the following sources. Michel Foucault: *Les Mots et les choses* (1966); "What Is an Author?" *Partisan Review* (1975). Edward Said: "*Abecedarium culturae:* structuralism, absence, writing," *Tri-Quarterly* (1971). Jacques Derrida: *De la grammatologie* (1967), translated Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1976); *La Structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines,* in *L'Ecriture et la différence* (1967); "Positions," Parts I and II, *Diacritics,* Winter 1971 and Spring 1973; "Différance," in *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs,* translated David B. Allison (1973); "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," *New Literary History,* VI (1974); "Signature Event Context," *Glyph,* I (1977); "Limited Inc abc . . .," *Glyph,* II (1978). Stanley Fish: "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics" (1970), as reprinted in *Self-Consuming Artifacts* (1972); "What Is Stylistics and Why Are They Saying Such Terrible Things about It?" *Approaches to Poetics,* ed. Seymour Chatman (1973); "Facts and Fictions: A Reply to Ralph Rader," *Critical Inquiry,* I (1975); "Interpreting the *Variorum,*" *Critical Inquiry,* II (1976); "Interpreting Interpreting the *Variorum,*" *Critical Inquiry,* III (1977). Harold Bloom: *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973); *A Map of Misreading* (1975); *Kabbalah and Criticism* (1975); *Poetry and Repression* (1976).

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NEW BLACK POETRY

Three Poems by Anthony McNeill

Author's Note: The mutations (not proofreading errors) in the following triad of poems are attributable to the high speed of their self-creation.

MOUNTAIN / 3

something was not quite right in the garden
the air-wife slpt in the eaves as mutant

typed in his enigma-message out of the bone
I ought to have called this manuscript sea

music out of the dark or something like that
Anyway I am going I falash myself twice com-

ing back every mutant is saying something so
precious only you knew my lover my darling

oblique disinterred he ran on beyond the hands
waving the rest of his body followed him home

so he called his hands perfect left and right
quailing away from the touch of the snake sta-

r-aight as an arrow inside him the beautiful
one in her separate closet the remarkable hus-

band bleeding for love with everything given
in the end he came to hinge on his hands as the

res-t of him went on split and dishonest still
working for appro-bation and hyphen at will if

you like O move from the sea for you ca-n O let
in the muted one from the snowfall O let in the

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injured bird up the canyon yawning its cer-evi-
ces shining

At the start of the birds he knew he was finished

MOUNTAIN / 5

there was only the seed bursting the head followed
home from the singing the gigantic gull planet the

water inside her she sang all night to her earth-
husband and lover fell by the way as the heron re-

righted myself and was lifted out of control suck-
ing the stone-god's message from the dark flower O

holy the rose the violet singing their messages the
eyes flash them back through the cries of the peb-

bles O bless me with knowing O bless me with knowing
the jar followed the colours unspooling wrote and re-

wrote the messages whirling out of the ether the bride
moved over her country the God-music out of Johann

Sebastain moving the lizard so at last he knew
The bells came back from the sea the winter flashed

down with the bells under the illness the ship moved
the chalk-milk managed a victim again so the poet

called down for pads for his fingers for hair for his
head bulged with the beauty of absolute love

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Over the hand swung the apple-tree shinging at last
The mutant-spoke twisting the poet the mutant eye

staring past dark came impossible houses with roses
the poet went on to the universe holding the

formula neutral the brain gusting away so the willow
moved on gaping at snow and her victims a-t sea and

the air whistled back the choruses ringing revival
In the end he realized his air-wife was all

MOUNTAIN / 10

the fang comes back with every tooth gaping
sense ceases to matter only the lovely long

line fluid as summer frothy as cake with the
O everything falling the pieces breaking in-

side me the quest for the money ending as u-
sual with poetry-horses and absolute un-

success so let us go back to death and its no-
thing So let us go back to the flesh turned on

itself in the coffin the pig beating within it
I want to be Man and immortal implored the sad

poet hooked by the straight with its safety and
refuse to follow the stricken O refuse to foll-

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ow the heads yawning as chambers a hollow of wind
and feculent echoes a canyon of track and retrack

an idiot compared to the marvellous system O body
of lights and the

So he saw that God was his own
O body I live in deceitful and fickle

O nostril I clean to no purpose
O ears I clear out only to hear

the thubder re-knocking as thunder swong
doubling mutants O tripling mutants

So his life remained blesses and falling
the mutant allowed in however the loss

the verb reversed into nomen the adjective
holy among the other perfections

the fairy-tale poet singing past poverty, lone-
liness grief the poet forgtting word out of the

mutant scared of revision
At the end of the fall flashed the bone

in time with the rhythm
So the hand went on through the sorrow-tree singing

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Lorenzo Thomas

(An Excerpt From) SCREEN TEST

Don't count the time lost, neither. . . .
Robert Browning

Consider thoughts to live
In life
In golden coils,
Her spirit clasps you
Hugs you close
To learning life's considerations
Gamely flutter
Pennants panties
Scenes badly-lit
In old movies
On the sheet tacked up
On the wall
Off the wall
Jazz solos against space
Feeling the people's sigh
Or soft voice harmonies
Describing the origin of sighs;
A volcanic garden.
Dark-panelled walls
Dusty dim Tiffany lamps
Pictures of Burn-out Johnson
Shutting em down
At Daytona or Summernationals
Scoring a long-disputed TKO over
Underrated Kid Flash

The quiet Paddock Bar in New Orleans
The Tack Room in Hot Springs
Beneath Bold Ruler's fading portrait

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Our booth
Embraced in privacy's dim recall

The gentle homing instincts of a life
Spent well and gently
In a world's turmoil: The green of sporting felt
Color television astroturf
Pointilliste lawns & formal gardens
All silence yearning

To operate the mind in three dimensions,
Smoke if you've got em
Sleep lightly in American accents
Sighs
Bartered like any other eloquence
Remembered, quoted

Prizes of some moment, far or recent
Shining in memory
Hollywood premiere searchlights
Scanning neon-blushing skies
For stars more brilliant
Than those whose limos birth them on the pavement
Impressed by the footprints of other earlier average
Americans who ascended in biograph light

Lips pout
Or catch the tongue between their fulsomeness
To seize her sighs
And still his questionings
Teeth flash and click,
Recover earlier imposter accents

A line vanishes
smudge
The words flee into telephonic moments
The silent poses that accompany the voice
Across charged ethers grown heavy with manners
And distance's natural doubts

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Echoes of our accents fortify us
Against these moments when the posse betrays
Us only to ourselves
The foot put right the proper laugh
Imposter phone booth shush a pirate haven

All our theatrics spring from private laws
Losses and moments, the first time seeing ourselves

Wrongly, a line vanishes
In a split second's prodigalness
Receiver cocked to the wrong ear
An inappropriate surmise of levity
His awkward charm
The others' puzzling elaborations

First, the pose. Then the posse

A self-portrait would have it
Oh him

Though others shall continue their puzzles of faith
Faithless wit, agonizing self-eradications
Awkward charm and flea market momentous worries
"Ladybug, ladybug . . ." Such things happen.
Occurrences fill the morning radio like kisses
Or the working man's stale-mouthed recriminations
For example,
There's the show in the phone booth
The numbers quickly scratched on the wall
Desperate labanotations
An awkward pas forging ahead despite of
Interruptions

In woodlands, forests, open spaces
Now
We primp ourselves on country odors
Denim cigaret smoke breath of beer
Lite

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Sunlit dust and shadowed forest streaming
Through the weft of garments and hair
And sunlit dust of pose around the phone
Speaking to distances in person

And, naturally, the distant ones in person
Have to be doing just the same to reconcile us
To the terror of our personal space. Space
Filling with all the dreams we decipher from logic
And late conversation

Recollection of the pose in the booth
Teddy Nadler, Eichmann, lover at the headache plateau
Reflection of the dance in the gloss of the glass
Facing the speaker with angles of traffic
And the breeze blowing through the smashed pane

This space missing the pane we take for granted
Taking this light show of our concern's affection
Granted, it's a moment's escape. A spectacle
Of awe for one's own attachments

Unwilling grace

Stubborn blessings dog the beaten heart
Like obnoxious but useful reporters
Tripping over microphone cords,
Stumbling in Charles Laughton's profound footprints

Retiring into the light

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Five Poems by Wanda Coleman

MEN LIPS

they smell of booze and come swaggering thru a barroom door
pressing eagerly for release—a pot to piss in

coughing up the spit of resentment. tight lines of i-love-yous
clipped short. curled under pressure

loose and slipping easy over. wet warm and juice flowing
flavor of mint

musty with musk—heady and eager to please
acceptance the tongue which finds its way between tight thighs

stretched from one pole to the next, vomiting
up word-politics and little green things with knives

licking down around my question
a nervous lapping tells me he wants out

his on mine sucking inward. a palate formed of prison bars
he tastes like damp and unfamiliar alleys

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AT VITAL STATISTICS

hard to breathe
hard to sit
processed

minutes stretch in day's wait
the broadness/discomfort
of flesh in the pock marked expanse
of beige tiles and rows of chairs stamped "recorder"

part of me follows the blue line
part of me, the red

zombies stagger through doorways/slips
of paper in hand
conjured up by clerical hoodoos
hidden pasts
loved ones married buried born

daydream: passing through the exit down the escalator
that does not work to the grey cement
regions where stilled autos
await ignition

in this mausoleum the hum of impatience
confinement
boredom
vague rustle, a newspaper read a dozen times
makes its way to the floor

it's done by computer. no mirrors here
this strange magic of certification/proof
of existence (we do not live until our papers
are stored, our numbers assigned)

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LESSONS

never get into a car with more than
one man

play dumb

if met with resistance, "act a niggah"

lie with your body
back it up with your eyes

pretend great hurt but don't cry

get high but never unaware

smile even if you can't stand it
tell him how good it feels

fake satisfaction

do not go into the pocket until he reaches
the third level of sleep

never go back to the crime scene

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QUEEN OF SINKING SAND

stone of my crown carries me down
sandy depths love/loyalty
my eyes fastened to the promise
above the angry roar of wind

he is there. she is there

how long, exorcism?

my head on plaid clad pillows
yellow roses dying/drying in rush of heat-gas
the dead man on bass guitar—a prophet

no. i do not want to stay young forever

his hand in mine tightly clasps
needy fingers. he is slipping fast. i can't hold on
the plunge into her womb/mouth
suicide by angel dust illusion
throat. fire

vision: her running out in front of the car
headlights, scream of brakes. curses
of the shaken driver
her plea for help choked in exhaust

please let go of me

i see him/profuse beard and
eye and black flesh—hoodoo of street wisdom
conjure of pool hustle
my heart thump-thump

"to your knees bitch!"

and i fall. rug burns and
mouth open to receive the scepter

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JERRY 1967

four hundred years of pressure

anxious eyes
who was his father? where was his place?

so what if he's white
so what if she's black

non-violent answer to his dream/guitar
strapped to back/her eyes find
their way into this song: miscegenation

in the restaurant at breakfast
the drunk dashiki called him honky
how dare she allow
whitey to befoul her womb

or the time outside the liquor store
the nigger junky picked his pocket
all they had in the world
seven dollars
he could not fight back

history lay between them
her hunger an ocean he could not swim
love did not survive injustice

opaque eyes. she couldn't protect him
nor he, she

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Two Poems by Jamé-Maçeo Camier

ANOTHER LIFE

for Raymond Roussel

I

In a strange country, crowds gather and say, "Can you *imagine anything that threatens to be as pathetic as the boy in* love with the *idea* of motion?"

II

A bird flew into his hands (honestly) and beat its wings as if it were a heart. Eventually, he threw it back into the air before it died. Its ascension was in circles like a pebble cast into a pond.

III

In a room furnished only with a naked light bulb and a stool, a man in evening clothes plays the accordion for a plotted plant. There is a word for this. It is the locusts' secret.

IV

"I won't be the victim of any more fictions. We have created several attractive existences for me, but now I have come alive."

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AFTER BRAILLE

such like to be dealt and informed
inverted to touch and rhythm
rising upon vein and pulse
pretense incurring disjuncture
demanding reversal to skin
scheme of texture of condition
cataract confinement of speech
slow thickness of saliva
sound upon sound and
always sliver of light
limp memory in focus
forced imprint and permanent
pierce of aura and eclipse
intuition of rain before
rain's appearance before
dark hush envelops
contention among aspects
held tight to flesh
yet further to cognate
in senses now amplified
compression of sound
so as to create implosion
then to be reduced to
shudders, subject to fits.

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George Pitts

THERE WE HELD DUET AND DUEL

Pears in rows of rooms, States near den of god
Time in all we felt to feel inside time, beside time, or deny it
And continue on our way in sail without wind, without hint without habit
Shirking not from failure, for failure it was to see, to miss then something accepted
There in view now there in wait, as if embedded here for memory
Gone we were from then yet still held by fruit, clinging to its past
Absorbed to a branch poising soul, around of it ourselves the rind
Ourselves outside thickly toward the thirst, to take inside its truth
Down in what we are when we meet ourselves arriving, do we accept ourselves the drink
Winding down what was in us undoing the coil unravelling light
Upshedding proof of common failure, potential of bloom from its root
Outward further accepting enriching the ghoul, his inward pyre invaded with difference
His reason broke in thirds, the wars among the two and God
Sealed so visibly from mind to seek when after strength
Is awed and empty of power determined of sense
To so inquest us after life what much we led theseselves
To seek under a will some face ourselves in soul
Set apart from the will yet known in wake of learning mine own
Whose pace attends my being home from self . . .

II

Whose god have we here, your wish or his act
And had you prepared the act would there be now prayer
As if to beseech him in you curtails demanding of him
For in vain led outside through his slaves
Those in murder of trust, whose need impels their being

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Away from its source, so that mild in their love do they
Inhibit their fever and consign to their lust the fervor of hunger;
Agreed lowering of the height subsists in that we fail
Far, far mid foreign of our sail do we love in extreme
Gone away are the bonds and in the heat do we bear the bud
That springs to our love which finds us, finally met unaccompanied
By my I, fully able in its way without cause to be glad
Rarely did we thank its welcome, for unexpectant
Of its norm do we prepare to be less, prepare to be so close to war
While in spirit near no work, waiting merely for exhaustion
Exhaustion to bring me passive, unable for you, female to the moment
Not charged as in one female from the day, but ignored to its embodiment
As one exiled in play his center evades fullness, and grand
Is the departure when swayed, for theatre the full form of the lie
Implants gesture and a means to divide, a settlement for leaving will undone
A mass behavior becomes the actor whose workings evolve as nature
As her nature implies his knowing and evasion, for nature in contempt unloved
Suspends essence fearless of the man, as in sex with prison
He flew deeply from himself into her folds, as in there nothing of himself
Was being anew in conflict, fresh from dear memories the mind became young
Unknowing of its play, assured in common with things, supple in their arms . . .

III

The alibi we cling to, the lie we are known, its rehearsal
Were issued from the same one who watched, the child of his fusion
His real love were his outcomes, his presentiments come
Dimly from birth through dimmer birth, a quotient forgetful
Of its textures, unmindful of successions, empty but of present
Where with sutures bind us before and after, yet only come aroused

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When secreted between the times, for Present is that we Knew
Not always in our being now, but times through our features show us back
As though meeting through themselves in me, asleep no more to callings
And a friend to them, as god would be had he access to his selfhood
For we wander all too clearly through awareness, the forest lit with marrow
The flavor of months obtrude the belly, a final mile deflates it . . .
A new sown breath suspends the sky, a cry gone out beyond millions
Neither carries the wind, which slides through words so simply
Nor do we pursue the words, nor do we pursue the wind
But they this arid sense is joy, joy who spins a toiled sense
Often though it dreams, withered one languid day, alive

IV

Yet if that's true, other things could be truer, more still
And then stiller, as if there were more still of what does not fail
Nor in a measure where to, but one has hopes, squeamish hopes
That deter each rest, yet to the deeper makeup accrue a savor
Therein are we victim beyond our fear, and are cheerful that we are so told
For every mode in which we cling ourselves is freer than our will
And certain things are here to riddle through the body and excrete
Not sensually to share but cast from harm toward noone, final in expulsion
Final until again, sapped of pleasing ruin, nor strong in waiving pleasure
As certain things are just in food, there are minerals induced by hunger
The lonely build inferior stairways to their whims, and wish that they may
No compass steers them clear, but the very asking the way insists darkness
It was a seeming pain where underneath was healing, a bruised blue darling

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Aclear in her prism, pleased to accept so, fatal struts her nerves
Her poetry was being a wreck, filled with silence unwanted puncturing
Unending overroom, something she hadn't provided to be is unknown even if beauty
And never will we blame her spurnings, yet something of her slows thick
Hard in return she mounts me, in now who we love is sacred, in thrift
As one in merger, the god we seize is otherness her foil, and exemplar
For here we dream a love so deeply to be meant, as lived into a fetus
Weaning life from the path, informed when of my season, my entrance asleep
My wake in its pasture, the yield where we stream, flavoring the airy chill
In feeling cool as height, dissembled among us my fear between voices
To honor my absence with waiting in arrest, to pry further its encroachment
Its medley of spite, where seeding darkly from myself has bloomed bitter
Unable to pervade wholly, yet knowing of our way who cuts us off unbeknowns
As if their thorns now impinged the gate, and asleep to their harm
We not dreaming their quiver draw long from its tips, expecting the next
The settled taste in the mind, offered up from dear unsettling her womb
In my incurlment, the silent balance aligned to the other, of mutual law
So pliant we incur grace, as straining for a waiting, at times the strain
Wears glamour, taut and spread flanked apart, come entering in me his stake
So humbly are we put to shore dissolving in your urge, so final you enmirror

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Joyless knowing, your damper tear subsides mine, and willows over birth
The priceless lair where seldoms frequent, hoarding their force in charity
The kind come near being love, a common love among servants, virtue of wealth
Of love come over ending, unremembering to a rest, thankful of reason's leave
The unsucceeder, the man eaten in his word, the tyrant swan, discoverer
Of plane proof, distresser of the stressedness, coeval with illusion
Nearing the other on baited prayer, through giving up its catch accepting love
As long will love just wait for man given up, given in to flight
And up the vital pull, attrition and a spewing of groinings, lunchly plucked
Pit clear down to a soul, overhead of senses, deposed of nubile flinchings
Married to the sake unfound in war, blessed of hallowing intent, to accept
As much my hunger as I can crave for love, undoing my own sake who wants fuel
The kind come densely sating breath with flavor, stroking the fire to engulf me
Victim of the ritual hunting for solace, whose rooming dwarfs my appetite
Given over to lustily asking less of my father, to provide that I be donor
The ruminating caller upon all thy love, their friend amid the fiery loss
The sword that peered no further than the true heart, the final of duels . . .

V

With loss is there this passion, some lover abroad his cast-off flight
Wrecked from entering bluer land, hovering lowly in the sail discarded

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Ashore in draught learning the deadness, the seething lonely wheel
Recited in circling the terror of merging, tail in my mouth allegiance
Decisions of eels residing in spurts, quelling the shifts in my shedding scales
Skin of my wafted tearful lure, incensing the care in ear, your couch
Where deeper fell so soft the pearl, even down where softness hides
Driven from above to dwell in silence, fateful quarters of the meek
Who live until their hour serves them, given their lack a boundless want
A greed so true it uplifts their search, and cancels what they have
To send them cast into the loss spending up their proof of love
Which carried with it no showing of lack, yet saw to serve us with its course
Little did we veer or swoon a fairy, telling myself I lurk in her shadow
Little did we know how braver than we were was our dream, peopled with ruins
Who verge upon themselves to rise from ruin, ruins of memory
Which tower in us waking the breath to shame, of a kind to cower the force
To retreat in conscience, staying the unfolding dam with offerings of guilt
That trouble to have us learn, what it was in us that kept us parted
Deserted from the love which mended feeling, and the love that wrought this hate
Of the whom we anger when we hide, concealing the witness of all thy work
To delay in the wings upon her mirror, where my flatness buoyed her surface
To so contort the fusion, that her gaze in there is being, being arrived one
Resorting in time to the wayward balance, living the her upon my breast

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Infused to a parting with myself, given to nurture her presence
Long amid ourselves yet bare of branching true, left to shiver in
our hurt
Driven afar from seeding, led narrow to her door, received
organless
Unheeded, given to her slow perusal, long then longing ebbing
torrent
Waited so love admits time, given spacious leeway to surrender
in
And be put to, subjected in him of his mounting climb, and her
to her petition
To infuse their common calling, to soar and yet hold with her,
entrusting
In their marriage to the world, forces who in costume wed my
body
And concede to me their fruit, as if the core to them is health
Endowed with no blossom, left to fend on its essence, survived as
lustre
The night void behind its rigor, alluring their form to loom
ahead the night
And betray to care its burden, the weary mental grudge dead
against her bosom
Entailed in her palms his wrath to sigh in healing, down reaches
as the drive
Ablaze aroused befriended in the heat, awash on sheer lather,
adrift
Down the ulterior canal, lush with sideways, damply closely
woven
Her lair so tight to diminish the room, and splinter asunder the
walls
Reducing the entrance to a door onto a vacant drop, devoid of
terror
Entered steep in her response, recalling the forms her being
shedded
Angels bred on work, who distill their loves unto their path,
reviving
The patient to seek his mask, and settle into a chore, which plots
his land

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BOOKS

THE FILMING OF PROUST

THE PROUST SCREENPLAY. By Harold Pinter. Grove Press. $2.95.

By publishing *The Proust Screenplay,* Harold Pinter and his associates demand a public response to what is usually a private and commercial question: should this movie be made? So far, he and Joseph Losey and the Proust copyright owner have been unable to raise money for the production. As a literary critic with particular interests in Proust and in film, I answer an unhesitating *yes* to their question. The reservations I shall express are not meant to obscure the excitement of this screen version of one of the masterpieces of the novel. Everything I say should be interpreted as part of a brief for getting this stalled project back in motion.

In a two-page introduction Pinter describes his collaboration with Losey and Barbara Bray, a BBC script editor. They decided to "distill the whole work" by organizing the film around two basic themes: a narrative movement of disillusion, and a more intermittent movement rising to the revelation of art. Pinter has written a straightforward screenplay of four hundred fifty-five numbered shots, with camera directions and sound effects. We are not very far from his own plays. Many of the shots (e.g., 61, 104) are so extended and complex that they would probably break down in actual production into several shots. Many ninety-minute films contain more than four hundred shots, but I believe that this ambitious scenario would require in the neighborhood of three hours—and should be allowed all of it.

Proust's three thousand-page novel, which I shall refer to as *In Search of Lost Time* or simply *The Search,* is written from two distinguishable points of view that usually fuse stereophonically into one rich sound: an aging narrator who recalls the story of his growing up to become a writer, and the young man (conventionally called Marcel) who grows up thinking he will never write. Because he never appears, the narrator remains disembodied, an all-pervading voice. Because his sensibility and person occupy the central space of the book (except in the extruded yet related episode of "Swann in Love"), Marcel's subjectivity saturates everything, yet he attains no physical, objective presence. In the book we never learn what he looks like, how he dresses and speaks. At the center of the action hovers an absence.

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How can one convey this first-person absence in a film where all personages are shown in the flesh? In *The Lady in the Lake* (1946) Robert Montgomery made the camera represent the protagonist; he appears only when reflected in a mirror. *The Search* might have offered the opportunity to try that device again in spite of its awkwardness.

Pinter and his collaborators did the safe and probably the right thing in staying with the tradition of the objective camera. They acknowledge Proust's subjective point of view in two ways. First, with few exceptions, Marcel remains a passive protagonist. He seems to do nothing but he watches everything. Whereas everyone else is a character in high relief, Marcel merely witnesses what goes on. Secondly, Pinter has dramatically modified the form of the story so that we begin at the end, not in an unspecified middle as Proust does. That way, Pinter tells us that the events have already taken place and that, as we go through them, the narrator may intersperse shots and sequences that do not belong to Marcel's sequential experience. It leads to a very complex yet effective flow of interwoven, rhymed, and associated textures that both challenge and support the narrative line. Pinter seems to offer this cross-cut technique as a loose translation of "involuntary memory." These two transpositions of Proust's fictional universe approach very close to the frontiers of cinematic art, sometimes risking boredom or incoherence. Yet I believe the story constitutes a beautifully appropriate context for experiments that have been tried by Eisenstein, Bergman, and the French new wave.

Despite the mnemonic embroidery, Pinter's screenplay follows a basic outline. He miniaturizes *The Search* in eight parts.

1. We begin with a yellow screen plus the sound of a bell. Cut to a kaleidoscopic sequence of shots that preview scenes to come and slowly locate a middle-aged man moving through a grotesque reception of old people. The yellow motif is shown to belong to a patch of color in Vermeer's *View of Delft.*

2. A somewhat complicated exposition presents Marcel's *drame du coucher* in Combray and the boy's distant relationship to the Duchesse de Guermantes and to Swann. Swann's long affair with Odette fifteen years earlier is presented in a fourteen-shot insert focused on jealousy. Marcel, now in his teens, spies on his lesbian neighbor, Mlle Vinteuil, watches the amazing steeples of Martinville from a carriage, and (in Paris) suffers Monsieur de Morpois' scorn of his attempts at writing.

3. Marcel (now eighteen) accompanies his grandmother to the seaside resort of Balbec. There he meets Saint-Loup and Charlus, two

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more members of the noble Guermantes family, and Albertine, an attractive and elusive young woman of uncertain origins. He tries unsuccessfully to kiss her.

4. In a lengthy section set in Paris, Marcel makes his entry into fashionable society through the Guermantes clan and discovers Charlus' homosexuality. His grandmother dies. Marcel cannot forget Albertine, who now virtually offers herself to him.

5. Back in Balbec, this time with his mother, Marcel is consumed by jealousy over Albertine's real or imagined lesbian relations. They attend dinners together where the rich hostess, Madame Verdurin, has Charlus bring a talented young violinist named Morel.

6. Albertine moves into Marcel's apartment in Paris. But his jealousy becomes all the stronger every time she goes out; he cannot work. Without her he goes to a concert by Morel at Madame Verdurin's Paris house. The music is exquisite, yet it is the occasion for the dramatic humiliation of Charlus.

7. A rapid series of sequences and landscapes represent the passing of twenty years for Marcel: Venice, Combray revisited, Paris during the war, Marcel "motionless as an owl" in a sanatorium.

8. An expansion and modification of the opening section, with the reverse effect of our now recognizing images that were incomprehensible the first time. The links between key experiences emerge; memory has kept them intact. At the reception the forty-year-old Marcel meets the eighteen-year-old Mlle de Saint-Loup, Swann's granddaughter. A rapid montage of shots, symmetrical with the opening, ends with the camera panning into the yellow patch of the Vermeer painting. We hear Marcel's voice: "It was time to begin."

I may have done too much cuing and voice-leading, but the film takes shape in these loose clumps of narrative. Any Proustian will notice the major omissions: Marcel's significant sleep and dream scenes, including the opening; Aunt Léonie and the daily round of life in Combray; the Madeleine incident of involuntary memory; Elstir the painter and Bergotte the writer; all meditations on philosophical and psychological subjects. Their absence causes only temporary disappointment. A reader unfamiliar with the novel may have trouble orienting himself. For example, three times Pinter begins a major sequence with an establishing shot or shots from the middle of the action and then has to use flashbacks to explain what is going on. The disruption seems arbitrary, even gratuitous. It does not come out of the novel nor does it belong to Marcel's or the narrator's memory processes. Such cinematographic manipulation creates unnecessary obscurity.

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However, Pinter's principal transposition—the new opening that anticipates and rhymes with the end—is fully justified and establishes the deeply subjective nature of Proust's creation. The screenplay also performs some brilliant telescoping in order to salvage a few comic interludes (like the one about the Duc de Chatellerault and the footman) and highly visual incidents (like Saint-Loup's gymnastic trip around the café with Marcel's overcoat).

The two complementary themes of disillusion with life and the revelation of art do not emerge as clearly as they should from this version of Marcel's story. Pinter does not adequately show us that a large part of Marcel's disappointment springs from his failure to become a writer, to do the work he has chosen for himself. For a variety of reasons, including the film medium itself and the elimination of the writer Bergotte, Marcel's obsession with registering experience in words remains in the background. Yet the excitement of the ending depends on our understanding that at last Marcel will get down to work as a writer. One place where Pinter misses a perfect opportunity to broach this literary theme comes at the end of the Martinville steeples sequence. Riding on top of the carriage and watching the three steeples perform their stately dance across the sunset sky, Marcel is inspired to write down his feelings on the spot. When he has finished, he cackles like a chicken that has laid an egg. In the scenario, both the writing and the cackling disappear! Furthermore this is the text Marcel's father shows to Ambassador Norpois a few scenes later for an opinion. At that moment Norpois (or Marcel) could well read the text not silently but aloud, the cinematographic equivalent of its being quoted in the book. This literary incident is the necessary preparation for the return to writing at the end after so many barren years.

Inexplicably, Pinter mutes the dramatic side of another important incident. Marcel, aged thirteen, sees Swann's daughter Gilberte for the first time, through a gap in the hedge. In the screenplay, we merely see "her black eyes, smiling." In the novel, Gilberte makes an emphatic gesture that Marcel cannot decipher. Years later she tells him that it was an obscene gesture meant to express her desire for him. How could such an important visual image be left out of the film version, especially since the later conversation between Marcel and Gilberte is included?

The subtle intermittent pace and the powerful use of color and silence in this scenario redeem its faults, many of which are correctable. For another opinion I recommend Stanley Kauffmann's review of Pinter's screenplay in *The New Republic* (December 24, 1977). He calls

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it "incomparably the best screen adaptation ever made of a great work." He tells why and shows that he knows Proust well. I stand by my strictures, but I vote with Kauffmann that this film should be made. It documents a fascinating cultural milieu. It catches a strong glint of Proust's haunting subjectivity. It enlarges the language of film in order to encompass one of the most sustained products of the human imagination.

ROGER SHATTUCK

THE NAKED BRIDE

MARCEL DUCHAMP: APPEARANCE STRIPPED BARE: By Octavio Paz. Viking Press. $10.95.

The real apple plucked from the bowl has, in our desacralized age, no allegorical resonance. We pick it up; we eat it. Most of the time it simply does not cross our minds that this object is symbolically freighted. But if the apple we encounter is represented, in a painting, or a poem, it is hard to see it any other way. Representation as one kind of symbol system seems naturally to open onto other symbolical realms. Around the depicted apple cluster associations that appear as much a part of the object as its color, its texture, or the shadow it casts in fictive space. The text—mythic, sacred, historic—that seems to stand behind most depictions serves as the real model, the ultimate truth, rendered by the work of art. It was the task of both realism and modernism to free representation from its servitude to this kind of scripture. The work of Marcel Duchamp is related to this task as it is to nearly everything else—eccentrically.

For the layman, Duchamp is the artist of the outrageous gesture. He is the painter who put moustaches on the *Mona Lisa,* who signed a urinal and declared it a piece of sculpture, who in a final act of notoriety gave up art for chess. But for critics and historians another piece of Duchampian defiance is far more intriguing. Ten years after ending his career as artist and resigning his unofficial post as New

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York Dadaist-in-residence, Duchamp published an elaborate document for which his major painting, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, had been in some way the illustration. And with this editorial act, Duchamp smuggled allegory back into the heart of modernism.

The Bride Stripped Bare. . ., also known as the *Large Glass*, was finished in 1923 and publically exhibited in 1926. The *Green Box*, which served as the text for the work, was published in 1934. In 1945 André Breton wrote "The Lighthouse of the Bride," the first major essay on Duchamp, which, though it took account of the information available in the *Green Box*, nevertheless maintained the *Large Glass* in the tradition of mainstream Dada, that is, in the tradition of the "amorous machines" of Picabia and Max Ernst. "We find ourselves here in the presence of a mechanistic and cynical interpretation of the phenomenon of love," Breton declared. But twenty years later, in the midst of that decade whose art was to become a monument to the work of Duchamp, another poet produced a serious study of the artist. Octavio Paz's *Marcel Duchamp or the Castle of Purity*, published in 1968, established the essentially mythic and esoteric nature of the *Glass*: the painting and its text formed a system decipherable through elaborate hermeneutics. Paz's attempt was not the first of these, and certainly not the last. The work has been submitted to psychoanalytic, cabalistic, and linguistic interpretation. The special prestige of Paz's essentially mythopoetic interpretation comes not only from its own lucidity, but from Paz's status as a major poet once associated with surrealism.

Ten years later Paz has published another book on Duchamp. *Appearance Stripped Bare* is not exactly a new work. It combines a 1973 text written for the Museum of Modern Art Duchamp retrospective with the earlier *Castle of Purity*, to which an extensive new section has been added. The 1973 text addresses itself to the shock Duchamp delivered to the art world from beyond the grave. The last twenty years of his life had been given over to the production, in secret, of a companion piece to the *Large Glass*. Installed in the Philadelphia Museum three months after his death, this work is an intricate, diorama-like assemblage whose name is taken from the prefatory note of the *Green Box*: *Etant Donnés*: *1° La Chute d'Eau, 2° La Gaz Illuminant* (Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas). By enlarging his study to include the final work, Paz is attempting a definitive interpretation. *Appearance Stripped Bare* proposes a key that will unlock the whole system of Duchamp's production.

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Paz's reading of Duchamp turns on the various traditions of mystic love in which the ecstatic moment is a vision in which the essential invisibility of the Real is recognized. Paz calls on Tantric myth, the Eleusinian mysteries, the erotic traditions of courtly love, and Neoplatonic treatises to situate the Duchampian themes of nudity, desire, and chaste—because unconsummated—lubricity. Paz emphasizes the viewer's role: love's conceptual consummation through vision. For example, "Provençal erotica and Duchamp's own rely on physics. In both cases the operation consists of distilling the erotic fluid until it is transmuted into a gaze. The contemplation of a naked body in which alternately nature is revealed and the *other* reality hidden. The Bride's veil is her nakedness."

Into this realm of revelation as mystery, Paz must admit Duchamp's irony, his parodic stance. Coruscating, destructive, Duchamp's initial irony deflates art's innocent pretentions to knowledge. But then, at a second stage, which Paz calls meta-irony, Duchamp leaves the realm of negation and emerges at a point beyond it.

> Duchamp's work is a variation—yet another one—on a theme that belongs to the traditional art and thought of our civilization. It is a twofold theme: love and knowledge. It has a single goal: to penetrate the nature of reality. It is a variation in meta-ironic mode: love leads us to knowledge, but knowledge is barely a reflexion, the shadow of a transparent veil on the transparency of a glass. . . . We are the eyes with which the Bride sees herself. Avid eyes by which she is stripped, eyes that close at the moment her garment falls on the glass horizon.

The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even is mainly composed of fastidiously rendered mechanical elements suspended in a huge free-standing pane of glass. References in Paz's statement to transparency, glass horizons, etc., obviously apply to this work, but also to the whole of Duchamp, and thus to the *Etant Donnés* as well. The *Etant Donnés* is seen through two peepholes drilled in an oaken door. Further framed by the opening in a brick wall, the focus of one's manipulated gaze is squarely on the hairless pudenda of a naked girl spread-eagled on a pile of branches set in front of an open landscape. Obviously the product of body-casting, the figure's hyperrealism is at home with the rest of the assemblage, in which real substances are used and the little lamp held by the girl sheds real light. Paz has no difficulty moving back and forth between this work and the *Glass.* Duchamp, he says, "was fascinated by a four-dimensional object and the shadows it throws, those shadows we call realities. The object is an

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Idea, but the Idea is resolved at last into a naked girl: a presence." Yet is it possible to call the last work by Duchamp a "resolution"? Can the obviously intentional, near-pornographic vulgarity of that final diorama be calmly assimilated into the rest of the work?

In some sense, Paz's indifference to the visual aspect of Duchamp's work, his apparent conviction that its perceptual qualities have nothing to *say*, derives its justification from the master himself. Duchamp, who professed never to take a stance on anything ("Ma position est l'absence de position"), did grow hot under the collar on the subject of conventional, or rather, modernist painting. This he derided as merely "retinal" or "olfactory" because it was without ideas. Paz refers to this position at the very outset of his discourse: "Duchamp was a painter of *ideas* right from the start and . . . he never yielded to the fallacy of thinking of painting as a purely manual and visual art." This sentence, coming on the heels of a comparison between Duchamp and Picasso, implies of course that Picasso was stuck in that "fallacy"—along with Matisse, Mondrian, Malevich—all of whom might be rather chagrined to discover that they were nothing but technicians whose work was without *ideas*. But, although this is a generalization to which there are many exceptions, the literary sensibility is often unimpressed by the power of a visually rendered idea. One has the sense that Paz, along with the other Duchamp interpreters, is much more interested in and at home with the textual side of Duchamp—the notes and in the *Green* and later the *White Box*—than with the silent, visual world of the works. And the concerted effort, the import, of the entire hermeticist enterprise is to fold Duchamp back into premodernist art, into tradition. The presence of the text is taken as permission for a scriptural reading, in which the visual is seen as figuring forth the underlying model of the Word.

But we must acknowledge several facts. Duchamp may have been an intriguing writer, but he was a *visual* artist. Whatever he may have thought of visuality (and I think he came to despise or maybe despair of it more and more), it was the medium he chose, or perhaps felt stuck with. Furthermore, he had a high regard for silence. For the first ten years of its public life, the *Large Glass* was deprived of words. It stood, a silent, enigmatic, visual monument, not yet buttressed by the chatter of its (L)egend. Duchamp may have been interested in both images and texts, but it is the physical and temporal distance between them that seems to have compelled him, not a tradition of continuity and closure. The text and the allegorical dimensions it promises to open behind the *Glass* are never permitted to *inhere* in the visual matrix of the work.

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It therefore seems a bit too quick to hustle Duchamp back into the arms of tradition. At certain points in his argument Paz does indicate a *post*modernist vocation for Duchamp. But in *Appearance Stripped Bare*, postmodernism remains a *terrain vague*, while the armatures of tradition, the mythopoetic structures erected on the foundations of the *Green Box*, become ever more elaborate.

The first sentence of *Appearance Stripped Bare* reads, "Perhaps the two painters who have had the greatest influence on our century are Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp," and the implication is, since the two men were contemporaries, that this influence was concurrent. But Duchamp had no influence until the 1960s, at which point it became immense. For Duchamp is the artist of postmodernism. And postmodernism—a product of what Guy Debord has called "the society of the spectacle"—is about the ascendancy of the photographic. The photographic is entirely distinct from the iconic on the one hand and the verbal on the other. It is a system of utter silence and of frozen immobility . . . to which a story is uncertainly attached. As I have argued elsewhere (see *Partisan Review*, no. 3, 1977), the photographic obeys special laws controlling the way images may be invested with meaning. To confuse this relationship with that of the older allegorical mode is to make a fatal error. This system has affected us already, structuring our real and our imaginative lives, and will affect us more and more. Duchamp can be shown to have been rather deeply engaged in its exploration.

In the preface to the notes for the *Large Glass* Duchamp speaks of the necessity of finding an instantaneous state of rest (an isolated sign) within a succession of facts. This state of rest has to do with extra-rapid exposure. Paz's interpretation places this notion of exposure within the context of both the *mise à nu*—the stripped or denuded bride—and the moment of revelation. "Negative theology," he writes; "in order to see we must close our eyes. In the darkness, Diana surprised in the bath: *ultra-rapid exposure.* A new concordance: all the Neoplatonic texts, beginning with Plotinus, say that the vision never arrives slowly, it is a sudden illumination. A *flash.*" But the note sustains a more literal reading. The instantaneously wrought state of rest, extracted from the flow of succession by means of extra-rapid exposure, is the description of photography, using some of its own language. And to maintain the *photograph* as an enigma, if that is what Duchamp is doing, is to think something at once both shocking and profound.

ROSALIND KRAUSS

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A SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION

THE FEMINIZATION OF AMERICAN CULTURE. By Ann Douglas. Avon Books. $2.95.

Ann Douglas' book is an analysis of the process whereby women, displaced from their role in the economy when the items of household industry were replaced by factory-made material, and ministers, whose position of spiritual authority was undermined with the demise of state-supported clerical tenure, joined together to obscure their mutual unimportance by becoming caretakers and promoters of the culture of feelings. In so doing they took literature as the voice of their cause. And to some extent this book is about the ongoing effects of one of the most commercially successful, ideologically powerful, and artistically distasteful strains of literature to emerge in nineteenth-century America. Douglas develops an extended thesis about the involvement of women and ministers in the transformation of Calvinist theology into the sentimentality of nineteenth-century ladies' fiction and, through this fiction, a general commercialization of the inner life which has characterized America since that time.

As historical scholarship the work is a direct descendant of Perry Miller's volumes of the "life of the mind" in America. But because Douglas comes to the task with feminist, Marxist, and Freudian tools, as well as learned and respectful knowledge of the intellectual and social history of Christianity, she pays more attention to the importance of sexuality, and shows more sophistication and tolerance in probing the apparently mindless drives of individuals in culture.

Her social history of the rise of sentimentality shows how women and ministers coped with their exclusion from the economically productive world of men, "sentimentalizing" their status, reassuring themselves that the "feminine" values with which they were left were indeed the highest ones. The minister becomes a middleman between the world of commerce and the world of women, with the woman as the item on which his future influence might be based. Influence, the business of surreptitiously inculcating men with "feminine" moral values, becomes the *raison d'etre* of the sentimental lady's life as well as the major rationalization of her powerless position. Women writers like Sarah Hale write in such publications as the *Ladies' Magazine* that

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women with their God-given talents can obtain an influence "paramount to authority."

> They may enjoy the luxuries of wealth, without enduring the labors to acquire it, and the honors of office, without feeling its cares, and the glory of victory without suffering the dangers of battle.

Douglas' work often draws its strength from material like this and like the following tribute from *Godey's Lady's Book*:

> See? she sits, she walks, she speaks, she looks—unutterable things! Inspiration springs up in her very path— . . . A halo . . . encircles her, and illumines her whole orbit. With her, man not only feels safe but is actually renovated. For he approaches her with an awe, a reverence, and an affection which before he knew not he possessed.

As Douglas points out, the power and position this woman is supposed to have makes her completely dependent upon a man's response. Moreover, she is not really living in the eye of man so much as in the idea of "influence" itself, surrounded by other women as if by mirrors.

Douglas argues that the real benefits of "influence," the luxuries of wealth without labor, were those of the "consumer." A woman reading the description of her spiritual qualities in *Godey's Lady's Book* would soon be looking at the fashion plates in the back of the magazine to see how her spirit should be dressed. And in spreading this "spirituality" abroad, the woman, and the minister who catered and condescended to her, were laying the groundwork for a commerce in mass-reproducible emotions. "Influence" became the mother of advertising. Women became the subconscious of capitalist culture, the prime target of the first advertising agencies. And shopping, a woman's major activity, became the dream-life of the nation.

This is an appealing clarification of an observation that is not new. But one wonders whether Douglas has mistaken this single historical phenomenon for a developing process in advertising and commerce that had already been long under way. Douglas' generalizations never seem to match the richness of the phenomena she describes. The damage done to women and culture by the tendency to sentimentalize is not conveyed by analysis of the situation of women so much as by the depiction of their activities. It is when Douglas describes the interaction of "influence" with theology and fiction, when she connects the alienation of women with the whole impulse to miniaturize

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and make quaint in America, that she begins to suggest the bizarre unreality accepted by the sentimental eye. And as she does so the variety and diffusion, the sheer density of the activity of sentimental life, seem larger than can be adequately accounted for by her outline of the process of "feminization."

Douglas' explanation of the dynamics of this process suggest that the problem was capitalism. If sentimentalism always borders on dishonesty, she writes, "it is a dishonesty for which there is no known substitute in a capitalist country." But although she indicates the immense complexity of the problem with this statement, she does not organize the detailed material of the book to illuminate the interconnections of capitalism, sentimentality, and sexism. She offers the general explanation that "pressures for self-rationalization of the crudest kind were overpowering in a country propelled so rapidly toward industrial capitalism with so little cultural context to slow or complicate its course." "Sentimentalism" provided the means for this rationalization. But Douglas backs away from a straightforward discussion of the forces of money.

Douglas asserts that what was needed to deal with sentimentalism was a "fully humanistic historically-minded romanticism." The concluding section of the work, entitled "Protest," explicates Margaret Fuller's life and Herman Melville's work as examples of this romanticism. It is clear, however, that for all the strength with which both figures resisted their culture, both were terribly damaged by it; in the face of the massed forces of their time their answers seem fragile.

Douglas' own work is also presumably an example of this "fully humanistic historically-minded romanticism." However, the book seems not to have escaped entirely the process of trivialization about which she writes. To convey the relevance of past to present, Douglas uses analogies from modern consumer culture in describing nineteenth-century women. Thus sentimental ladies exhibit "consumer amnesia," avoid looking into a "candid camera," their world is seen as the origin of "camp." A character like Little Eva is the original "teen angel." This strained and trendy tactic takes on unsettling proportions with her title. For to refer in the title of a book to the "feminization" of a culture as opposed to, say, its "sentimentalization," seems a kind of high cultural advertising, a move to draw attention to the subject by way of fancy relevance to the present. And in this instance she is advertising with a very sensitive word.

Douglas is at pains to explain that she is trying to avoid what might be called a merely "feminist" analysis. She explains that she uses

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"feminine" in a traditionally sexist way because she does not want to change the term until the phenomenon itself is understood; she does not want to finesse, by a shift in terms, a problem so rooted in institutions and culture that it might be simplistic to think there is any sure way to solve it. But her failure to take a position on the relationship between capitalism, sexism, and sentimentalism leaves us with, at least, a basic ambiguity, and more, the feeling that she might not be as politically committed as she would have us believe. It seems, in short, a sentimental stance itself. For whatever reason, this is a book that, driving toward the historical and economic roots of a problem, has not come to the point where the final assertions can be made. Douglas' quest has driven her to such extensive research and to such a level of analysis that her book will be the one to correct and clarify. It is so well done that one wonders why the author relied upon and then left so confused such a basic and volatile concept as "feminization" itself.

GARY STEPHENS

SOCIOBIOLOGY IN THE DOCK

THE USE AND ABUSE OF BIOLOGY: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF SOCIOBIOLOGY. By Marshall Sahlins. The University of Michigan Press. $3.95.

Most biologists would probably agree that the study of the social behavior of animals in an evolutionary context is not only a wholly reasonable undertaking but one that is crucial for any understanding of the origin of the species. Obviously, natural selection operates not only on the structural and dynamic features of the body parts of animals but also on their social forms. Just as biologists can legitimately enquire into how evolution managed to achieve the intricate and superbly adapted facet eye of the honeybee, so can they ask how it was possible for natural selection to give rise to the intricate and superbly adapted society of the beehive. Although Darwin himself was well aware of the importance of behavior for his theory, it was only in the 1930s that the evolutionarily oriented study of animal behavior really got under way, with Konrad Lorenz as a Founding Father. By the 1950s, the subject had become an established academic discipline under

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the name "ethology," and was finally legitimized officially by the award of a Nobel Prize to Lorenz and to two other early pioneers, Karl von Frisch and Nikolaas Tinbergen. In the 1960s, the rather qualitative, somewhat fuzzy evolutionary reasoning that Lorenz had brought to ethology came to be given a more quantitative and sharper formulation. In this latter-day development the theory of "kin selection" played a central role. According to that theory, the evolutionary fitness of the behavior of an animal is not given solely by the extent to which that behavior serves the reproductive success of the animal; it takes into account also the extent to which the reproductive potential of close relatives is served. Kin selection can thus account for the superficially counterselective origin of the alarm call of birds. For though by drawing attention to itself the alarmist reduces its own chances of leaving offspring, its self-sacrificial behavior does raise the reproductive success of its close relatives in the flock, and hence augments what is now called its "inclusive fitness" as a social animal. This conceptual advance led to the development of an ethological subdiscipline specifically concerned with the social behavior of animals, for which Edward O. Wilson's monumental treatise *Sociobiology*, published in 1975, provided both a name and an authoritative, comprehensive account. Admittedly, there exist differences of opinion among biologists regarding the accomplishments of this young subdiscipline, ranging from the view of one of the leading contemporary students of evolution, Richard Lewontin, that current sociobiology is little more than a caricature of Darwinism, to the view of one of the leading contemporary sociobiologists, Richard Alexander, that he and his colleagues have produced the most important advance in the understanding of evolution since Darwin. But regardless of any past achievements of sociobiology, it would be downright cranky for any biologist to deny that the professed general scientific goal of sociobiology is not intrinsically worthwhile.

Why then did the publication of Wilson's scholarly treatise cause such a hullabaloo? Why was Wilson made the object of laudatory feature stories in the Establishment news media, as well as the target of invective from the political Left, and even of personal assault? Because in a minor part of his treatise, otherwise devoted mainly to insects and other lower orders, Wilson claimed that the methodology and findings of sociobiology are applicable also to the social behavior of our own species, *Homo sapiens*. Thus Wilson proposed that the "new synthesis" of sociobiology can provide for the socially relevant human sciences, such as anthropology and sociology, a firm, and presumably objective, scientific basis. A few months later, Conrad Waddington, an

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eminent British biologist with impeccably progressive political credentials, published a friendly (and, as it turned out, posthumous) review of *Sociobiology* in *The New York Review of Books.* In response, a camarilla of Boston area academic hotbloods denounced his review in a letter to the editor and chided the by then deceased Waddington for failing to identify Wilson with the bogeymen of Marxist demonology, viz. the biological determinist and the complacent bourgeois scientist. In January of 1978, activists doused Wilson with water while he took part in a panel discussion at a scientific convention.

The University of Chicago anthropologist Marshall Sahlins also does not have much use for Wilson's treatise. But in his *The Use and Abuse of Biology* he offers a scholarly critique of sociobiology that is much more serious than the hysterical and demagogic attacks emanating from "Science for the People" propagandists. Sahlins opens his critique with a dismissal of what he calls "vulgar" sociobiology, as exemplified by the popular writings of Lorenz and of Robert Ardrey, Desmond Morris, Lionel Tiger, and Robin Fox. Vulgar sociobiology "consists in the explication of human social behavior as the expression of needs and drives of the human organism, such propensities having been constructed in human nature by biological evolution." Such an explication—says Sahlins—demands a one-to-one correspondence, or isomorphism, between the character of human biological propensities and the properties of human social systems. But—and this is Sahlins' first important claim—no such isomorphism exists, because the presence of *culture* interrupts any straightforward causal chain between evolutionary phylogeny and human social morphology. Culture has evidently freed human behavior patterns from emotional and motivational necessities, as evidenced by the anthropological findings that the same human motives appear in different cultural forms, and different motives appear in the same forms. Hence there can be no biological determinism of human social behavior, and in so far as *Homo sapiens* is concerned, sociobiologists, vulgar or otherwise, are whistling in the dark.

Here Sahlins' argument seems convincing: any sociobiological enterprise which neglects the central role of culture in the shaping of human social behavior is futile. Moreover, he may be correct in claiming that the vulgar authors whose writings he consigns to the ashcan of sociological literature have not taken that role sufficiently into account. But Sahlins does not show that there is no conceivable version of sociobiology which *could* take the role of culture into account and might thus provide a biological grounding for human

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social behavior after all. First of all, although it greatly simplifies the analysis of any phenomenon if its structural features are isomorphic with a set of underlying causes, it is not true, as Sahlins appears to think, that isomorphism between antecedents and consequents is a requirement for their causal relation. If Sahlins' general demand for cause-effect isomorphism were valid, it would also be futile to search for a biological account of embryonal development: there is no ensemble of "propensities" in the egg which are in one-to-one correspondence with the properties of the fetus. (Actually the notion that there *is* an isomorphism between an animal and its genes happens to be an additional, purely biological misconception common among sociobiologists.) Second, and more importantly, Sahlins seems to take it for granted that the symbolic character of cultural tradition puts it beyond the reach of biological explanations. But unless Sahlins regards "culture" as some kind of transcendental phenomenon with laws and dynamics of its own, independent of the biological structures of the human (and humanoid) organisms that originated and perpetuated it, it is far from self evident that there cannot in principle be a sociobiological account of culture. In a later part of the book Sahlins returns to this problem and declares that the nature of the relation between culture and biology is "hierarchical," just as is the relation between biology itself and physics and chemistry. According to Sahlins, "culture is biology plus the symbolic faculty," just as "biology is physics and chemistry plus natural selection." Aha! So biology has something to do with culture after all. It "puts at the disposition of culture a set of means for the construction of a symbolic order." Consequently all it would take for a culture-inclusive sociobiology of the future to connect that symbolic order with biology is a theory of meaning, just as it took a theory of biological information for molecular biology to connect heredity with physics and chemistry. And since the present lack of a theory of meaning (presumably to be supplied one of these days by cognitive psychology) is just as debilitating for social anthropology in its attempt to account for human society as it is for sociobiology, it seems unreasonable for Sahlins to single out only the latter for special criticism.

Next, Sahlins trains his guns on "scientific" sociobiology, which, according to him, is vulgar sociobiology plus the theory of kin selection. He clearly holds scientific sociobiologists, such as Wilson and Alexander, in somewhat higher regard than their vulgar colleagues, even though, like the latter, the former fail to appreciate the crucial interposition of culture between human nature and social behavior. To their credit, however, scientific sociobiologists have

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understood that kinship is the primary explanandum of any social science. Hence for Sahlins they qualify at least for taking part in the discussion; he finds that "the issue between sociobiology and social anthropology is decisively joined on the field of kinship." It would follow, therefore, that if, in view of the admitted central importance of kinship for human behavior, actual kinship relations do not turn out to be ordered in accord with the predictions of kin selection, then the project of scientific sociobiology collapses. And—this is Sahlins' second important claim—the ethnological record shows "that there is not a single system of marriage, postmarital residence, family organization, interpersonal kinship, or common descent in human societies that does not set up a different calculus of relationship and social action than [sic] is indicated by the principles of kin relation." In support of this claim, Sahlins cites data from New Guinea, from the Sudan, and from the Nesias—Micro, Mela and Poly. These data show that, contrary to the demands of kin selection, under the kinship conventions of these societies not all of the closest biological relatives render each other mutual aid, i.e., are considered as kin.

Suppose we accept Sahlins' empirical data; does it really follow that scientific sociobiology collapses? No, because the mere fact that extant kinship relations do not match exactly those predicted from kin selection theory may mean simply that additional, complicating factors are at work (i.e., that the theory is merely approximate), a conclusion which, I am sure, most scientific sociobiologists would accept. Moreover, in all the examples (except one) adduced by Sahlins, on the whole, a person is biologically related much more closely to culturally defined kinsmen than to what passes for non-kin within his social horizon. Hence the role of kin selection in kinship convention seems more confirmed than refuted. To make the sociobiological project really collapse, Sahlins would have to produce a counter-theory of kinship whose predictions are better met quantitatively than those of the kin selection theory. In the absence of offering any counter-theory, Sahlins' rejection of scientific sociobiology on the basis of his kinship data is quite unjustified.

After having supposedly demolished the sociobiological approach to human behavior, Sahlins moves on to a general consideration of the current conceptual status of evolutionary theory. According to him, "the Darwinian concept of natural selection has suffered a serious ideological derailment in recent years," a disaster to which sociobiology made a primary contribution. How has evolutionary theory been derailed? Here Sahlins makes his third important claim: evolutionary theory has been corrupted by the identification of natural selection

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with the operation of the free market economy. As a result, the concept of natural selection has been transformed from the initial Darwinian "appropriation of natural resources" into a capitalistic "expropriation of others' resources." To document this allegation, Sahlins cites examples from the sociobiological literature in which the authors resort to economic terminology, such as "cost benefit analysis," "investment," and "profit," and regard animals as entrepreneurs seeking to maximize their genetic capital. Moreover, since economic theory is addressed to purposive transactions among economically motivated persons, the free market conception of natural selection has smuggled animistic elements into evolutionary theory. Thus sociobiologists are wont to attribute intentional states to genes, such as self-determined strategies and the moral qualities of altruism and selfishness. Once more, Sahlins weakens his valid criticisms of sociobiology by exaggerating his case. First, (contrary to their own pretensions, apparently accepted by Sahlins) sociobiologists are on the fringe rather than in the van of present-day evolutionary biology. Hence the sociobiological "derailment" of natural selection by obstructing its tracks with economic baggage is a rather local phenomenon, of little significance for the general status of current evolutionary thought. Second, the mere borrowing of the notion of the free market does not by itself invalidate the sociobiological approach to natural selection, no more than the borrowing of the concepts of mechanical and hydraulic engineering by Descartes and his contemporaries invalidated human physiology. That Sahlins is able to present some cases from the sociobiological literature where shoddy reasoning based on the economic metaphor has led to ludicrous propositions does not mean that the whole of Wilson's treatise is to be rejected as crackpot science. Does Sahlins really believe that there is not a single case of a complex social behavior pattern of infrahuman species which has been successfully explained by the sociobiological, free-market approach to evolution? For instance, what about the discovery inspired by the theory of kin selection that in the rare cases of polyandry found among birds the two males sharing a single female usually turn out to be brothers? Maybe there is some other explanation for this curious fact of natural history, but why not give sociobiology a little credit where it is due?

Finally Sahlins raises an issue which, though he considers it only in the context of the debate surrounding the sociobiological project, reaches down to the very foundations of science: can there be such a thing as a science that is an objective exercise of pure reason, not subject to influence by human affects or culture? David Hume, who held that "reason is, and ought to be, the slave of the passions" had

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already replied in the negative. More recently, such contemporary historians and philosophers of science as Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend, and Stephen Toulmin have maintained that the notion of culture-free eternal scientific truths is merely an illusion. Without giving any sign that he is aware of stirring up this epistemological hornet's nest, Sahlins makes his fourth and final important claim: since the seventeenth century natural history and its eventual successor, biology, have been shaped by an ideological dialectic with social thought, from Thomas Hobbes to Adam Smith, from Smith to Darwin, from Darwin to William Graham Sumner, and finally from Sumner to E. O. Wilson. In this diachronic dialectic the model of capitalist society is applied to the animal kingdom, and this bourgeoisified animal kingdom is then reapplied to the interpretation of human society. Here, as is the case for his other three important claims, Sahlins makes what appears to be a valid point. But since the reciprocal contamination of scientific thought and culture is not an exclusive debility of sociobiology, applying even to the hard physical sciences (not to speak of social anthropology), Sahlins' indictment of sociobiology and stigmatization of it as Scientific Totemism loses most of its force. To point out that sociobiology, just as other scientific disciplines, lacks true objectivity is not enough for a convincing indictment. Sahlins has to show that there is a better approach than sociobiology to the understanding of the social behavior of animals. And this Sahlins does not, and I imagine cannot, do.

In my opinion sociobiology has been ill served by both its advocates and its opponents. Sahlins' Introduction states that he wants "to refrain from the slightest suggestion of *ad hominem* criticism." Unfortunately, however, *ad hominem*, rather than *ad rem*, criticism of sociobiologists is what is really called for. In so far as the application of genetic biology to the understanding of human social behavior is concerned, it is not so much the case that the sociobiological project is intrinsically impossible as that many sociobiologists, by virtue of philosophical and political naiveté, lack of sociological insights, and overbearing exuberance, have greatly overblown the significance and scope of their findings. On their part, many humanists, social anthropologists, and left-wing biologists have overreacted to these exaggerated claims. In their not wholly unjustified fear of the political consequences of the work of would-be social engineers these critics of sociobiology have gone too far and dismissed as completely worthless also what there is of value in the sociobiological approach to animal societies. What is really needed now is a calm assessment of the real status of sociobiology, more critical than Wilson's and more generous and better reasoned than Sahlins'.

GUNTHER S. STENT

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DISSIDENTS ABROAD

A VOICE FROM THE CHORUS. By Abram Tertz (Andrei Siniavsky). Translated from the Russian by Kyril Fitzlyon and Max Hayward. With an introduction by Max Hayward. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. $10.00.

"Literaturnyi protsess v Rossii" [The Literary Process in Russia]. By Abram Tertz. In *Kontinent*, No. 1 (1974), pp. 143–190.

"Liudi i zveri (Po knige G. Vladimova *Vernyi Ruslan: Istoriia karaul'noi sobaki*)" [Men and Animals (based on G. Vladimov's book *Ruslan the Faithful: The Story of a Guard Dog*)]. In *Kontinent*, No. 5 (1975), pp. 367–404.

In September of 1965 Andrei Siniavsky (b. 1925), a critic and scholar of some note, was arrested on charges that he had published several works in the West, under the pseudonym Abram Tertz: a novel—*The Trial Begins*, short stories—*Fantastic Stories*, and an essay—"On Socialist Realism," all brilliant and devastatingly critical of the Soviet order. The trial of Siniavsky and Iuly Daniel, arrested on similar charges a few days after Siniavsky, became a *cause célèbre*, drawing the attention of the international intellectual community to the dissident movement in the Soviet Union. It is perhaps due to this publicity that the story of Siniavsky and Daniel eventually had a happy ending. After having served their sentences in a labor camp (seven and five years, respectively), Siniavsky and Daniel were able to continue their careers in literature: Daniel in Russia, mostly as a translator, and Siniavsky in the West, where he was allowed to immigrate in 1973. Tertz-Siniavsky's creative personality has many facets. Here, we see him as a publicist, satirist, aphorist, aesthetic theorist, and critic. His subjects are, basically, Russia and art. Often they are linked.

"The Literary Process in Russia" is programmatic, polemic, and provocative. Its pathos is that of Belinsky's "Letter to Gogol." The Russian writer is defined as a dissident. If he is not a dissident, he is not a writer. The writer must speak in "alien words." (Here, Tertz gives a broad existential meaning to a literary term coined by M. M. Bakhtin to describe a device of Dostoevsky's style.) The writer must combat "our own word." (The Russian *svoe slovo* is difficult to translate, particularly since Tertz puns *svoe slovo* with *sovetskoe slovo.*) He must overcome the familiar cliché, and its power. Hence, "all poets are Jews." (Tertz does not actually quote this line by Tsvetaeva but says

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this much in his own words.) Writers and poets, like Jews, are natural scapegoats.

Tertz senses the danger inherent in this negative image of the writer. He would not like Russian literature to become a single "book of complaints." But he has no vision or anticipation of a positive alternative. In this, he—and, one may say, the entire dissident movement—depart from the tradition of Russian literature which, for over a century, lived in the historical future. The drive toward a better future, no matter how illusory or misdirected, which animates Gogol, Dostoevsky, Blok, Maiakovsky, or even Platonov, is absent.

As Tertz points out, the Gulag syndrome is *the* central theme of Russian literature today. (Russian literature is defined as "dissident literature".) It is a discouragingly bleak and sterile theme, because it hinges on an unanswered, and unanswerable, question: how did it happen, and how does it continue to happen, that Ruslan (hero of G. Vladimov's Swiftian satire), such a "wonderful, peaceful, and humane dog" would become a Gulag guard dog? The existence of millions of Trezorkas, untrained mongrel dogs, untouched by ideology, offers no reassurance, because thousands of Trezorkas were, and still are, transformed into Ruslans. The mystique of "the people," in whom Russian writers of the past put so much faith, is another victim of the Soviet period of Russian history.

A Voice from the Chorus is a collection of short essays and aphorisms, excerpted from Siniavsky's letters to his wife, written while he was serving a seven-year sentence in a labor camp. (The translation is always competent, and in places outright ingenious. Hayward's introduction is excellent.) Interspersed with aphorisms in Siniavsky's own voice are others, usually quite short, picked out of the general hubbub of the prison camp. There is a distinct effort to establish the effect of a counterpoint. I do not believe that it is a success, because there seems to be no organic bond between Siniavsky's "own word" and the "alien word" of the chorus. While the persona of *A Voice from the Chorus* reminds one of Dostoevsky, it is *The Diary of a Writer* and not *Notes from the House of the Dead* which comes to mind. Chorus lines and occasional aphorisms which remind one that these thoughts were thought in a prison camp strike an unresolved dissonance with the intellectual, not to say bookish, main body of the book.

Siniavsky's aphorisms on the essence of art might be a revelation to a Soviet reader, but they are Neoplatonic clichés—most of these thoughts can be found in Schelling and Novalis, or in Dostoevsky and Apollon Grigoriev. One example: "A metaphor is a memory of that

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Golden Age when all was everything. A fragment of metamorphosis." Still, Siniavsky knows what he is talking about and therefore not only finds the way into that maze of fascinating paradoxes which is the essence of art but is also at home in it. A believer in the moral seriousness of art, he will also say: "Getting up to every imaginable trick, writing about everything on earth, art is in fact concerned solely with its own appearance, with admiring its self-portrait." A fanatic of truth in art, Siniavsky will occasionally suggest that art is mere make-believe and illusion after all. There are some aphorisms which present the artist as "the man with subtle sleight of hand," yet without a doubt Siniavsky also believes in the ultimate supremacy of religious art.

Siniavsky is fascinated by fairy tales "as a manifestation of pure art, perhaps the very first instance of art detaching itself from real life." On the other hand, he admits that he cannot overcome an inclination "to regard fairy tales as information about something real": he seems to believe in Jungian archetypes, mankind's collective memory, and, altogether, he is rather fond of anthropological speculation, for instance, the discourse on effigies and mummies. Yet all of Siniavsky's aphorisms on art seem to have this common denominator: "Art is not the representation, but the transfiguration of life." Ironically, the theory and practice of Socialist Realism, which Siniavsky has combated not only in his classic "On Socialist Realism" (1959) and the piece discussed here, but even in many of his reviews and essays published legally in the Soviet Union, fall within this definition, for do not Socialist-Realist critics fulminate against bourgeois "pseudo-objectivism" and advocate an art which will "transform life"? In a way, this is the famous Dobroliubov-Dostoevsky controversy all over again. Both sides believe that their particular transfiguration of reality has prophetic power. Like Dostoevsky, Siniavsky is an avowed idealist and mystic. He believes that "absoluteness is the only criterion of a writer's word," yet will never relinquish art's claim to involvement and leadership in the affairs of the world. Socialist Realism, as Dobroliubov before, does the reverse: it will take its cue from whatever political end it must serve, then claim the status of "art" for its product. Both will have their cake, and eat it, too.

Next to art, time is perhaps Siniavsky's main subject. Life in a prison camp produces some puzzling perspectives. "Time goes more slowly here," so slowly that it is perceived in the same way as space: "You seem to be walking through it." It seems to be precisely this fusion of space and time which eventually causes Siniavsky to challenge the authority of *chronos* (historical time) and to break through

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into the regions of *kairos* (absolute time): "All the time I have been hoping that I might draw a deep breath and wake up—to some higher life." Here, as in many other ways, Siniavsky's philosophy coincides with Dostoevsky's. This is certainly true of his pronouncements on Russia. (He advances the thesis of Russia's fundamental spirituality, and Orthodox religion.) Orthodoxy, with its emphasis on the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is seen to accord with Russia's national characteristics, which are perceived in Slavophile (or Dostoevskian) terms: ". . . fluidity, amorphousness, readiness to adopt any mould, our gift—or vice—of thinking and living artistically, combined with an inability to manage the very serious practical side of life." This sounds only too familiar. But couldn't it be said, with as much justification, that Russians have a penchant for reducing man to a machine or puppet, and human society to a scientific formula—and this with utopian fervor and a sincere hope to reach the millennium via that route? It is true, of course, that both tendencies show up, in different forms, even among Soviet dissidents: there is often just as much fervor in Russian "structuralist" thought as there is in the religious idealism of a Siniavsky or a Solzhenitsyn.

Siniavsky's God is Dostoevsky's God: "How amazing is God's dominion over us—total and despotic, yet painless and imperceptible; granting freedom without end, yet not allowing us to deviate by a single step from the predestined path." Needless to say, this paradox is analogous to the paradox about the fusion of "freedom" and "necessity" in art. At least in one passage of this book Siniavsky reaches the heights of Dostoevsky at his best. He tells about that fellow prisoner of his who sees himself as "the other thief," the one who had not repented on the cross—yet who firmly believes that "the other one" was saved, too. With a truly Dostoevskian touch, Siniavsky merely observes that shivers ran down his spine as he heard this. Thus, Siniavsky, like everybody and everything that is best about the Russian dissident movement, gets as far as Dostoevsky, and hardly any further. Now the question is: does this suggest that the dissidents are behind times and that their movement has no future, or was Dostoevsky truly very much ahead of his time?

VICTOR TERRAS

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THE GOOD SOLDIER

SERGEANT GETÚLIO. By João Ubaldo Ribeiro. Houghton Mifflin. $7.95.

CAPTAIN PANTOJA AND THE SPECIAL SERVICE. By Mario Vargas Llosa. Harper and Row. $10.95.

"I'm political," says Getúlio, a sergeant of the military police in Aracupe, Brazil; "I don't kill for nothing." On his chief's orders he has killed twenty people, probably more; he hasn't kept careful count; there's no need. National Democrat, Social Democrat, Laborite, Fascist or Communist, they're all the same for Getúlio, though "most National Democrats take a long time to die, they hang in the air like a chameleon." On orders he raids the Communist newspaper—then his boss tells him, "Get those Fascists, Getúlio, so they will learn not to burn other people's newspapers." But the central action which Getúlio's monologue covers is his attempt to bring in a political prisoner who has fled to the backcountry of northeastern Brazil. Halfway back to Aracupe, Getulio learns his prisoner, upon whom he has performed some backyard dentistry with a pair of rusty pliers to punish him for luring on a country girl, must be released. The winds in Aracupe have shifted and the prisoner is no longer the criminal he was a few days ago. But Getúlio refuses to hand over the prisoner to the "weakness" of troops sent for him. Goaded into fighting, Getúlio decapitates the lieutenant in charge of the troops, slings the head round and round at the end of a rope, and sails it into the middle of the "weakness," gravely disheartening them. Having eaten as a child the same red clay from which are made the brilliantly colored bulls on display on market days in villages, Getúlio is imbued with naive reverence for the mysterious forces moving in the land, so separate from the political forces vying in the cities, and a natural and graceful brutality. We sense in him the dangerous brooding of a milieu in which morality is not based on humane principles but political intrigue, and where issues are settled by hit men. It is the strength of Ribeiro's novel that we see Getúlio's awful nobility, the strength of a humanity tragically expressing its love of duty by executing with cold facility orders that require great inhumanity. Getúlio is tremendously human in Ribeiro's primitivist portrait of the man of the earth, the heroic pulse still strong in him, being hammered into a weapon by the modern world. Though he is utterly insane, Getúlio's strength is our

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hope for the future, Ribeiro says, for the land still produces such greatness. At the same time he is most splendidly our most barbarous past, and in our worst dreams of the future he is the steel and leather fellow who sublimely as a cow stares in at us through barbed wire.

In Vargas Llosa's comic novel, Pantoja, captain in the Peruvian army, is sent to the backcountry city of Iquitos to implement a special service for soothing the troops' lust so set to boiling by the jungle heat, spicy foods, and the incredibly beautiful women of Iquitos. With dedication and probity, Pantoja, an officer whom the term "regular army" fits perfectly, sets out to develop a complex and elaborate operation which will provide the men with special service on a regular basis. His beloved wife and mother accept the hardship of living off-base, and they believe his lie that he is involved in covert operations (their teddy bear Panta a spy!), hence his plain clothes, his jockey cap, his hangovers, his odd hours. Later, when the Special Service is in full swing, deploying by sea and air forty of Iquitos's finest and most patriotic strumpets, the enterprise scandalizes the city, and the strain of his work, already tremendous, pushes Pantoja to his limits as an officer. Paralleling Pantoja's success and rise to prominence is the rise to fame of Brother Francisco, a fanatic whose worship consists of crucifying frogs, rats—and bigger game.

Vargas Llosa distances the reader from the characters and their action by telling more than half of the novel through military reports, newspaper items, and radio broadcasts. In the chapters where he uses scenes of dialogue, the author distractingly jolts the reader back and forth between several scenes occurring simultaneously. These devices do not conceal but heighten the fact that the novel's plot is skimpy and the pace slow.

The book's satire of the military's mindless adherence to procedures and the pitiful slaves to which this reduces men is linked with another satiric motif, contrasting the love tied up in crucifixions with the love a woman gives a man, a theme which apparently still needs arguing in Peru.

Getúlio and Pantoja bring about their own downfalls by simply doing their jobs too well. Their commanders are befuddled by political problems which they further fuddle by sending these dauntless men to solve. *Sergeant Getúlio* and *Captain Pantoja and the Special Service* praise the strength, courage, and faith of men who are made fools by the fools who command them. Vargas Llosa's execution of this theme is more suavely and pleasantly carried off, perhaps, but Ribeiro's is bolder and more from the heart.

JERRY BUMPUS

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ICARUS GROUNDED

DELMORE SCHWARTZ: THE LIFE OF AN AMERICAN POET. By James Atlas. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. $15.00.

When he spoke, his hearers saw thunders and heard lightnings, antinomies crumbled, he battered a subject like a heavy bag, sprang farfetched conceits, quoted a Greek, a Shakespeare, a stumblebum in a seedy gym, lapsed into *echt*-Joyce, discoursed on "big broads," the deterioration of American gin, why Mel Ott raised his foot so high before swinging, the death wish of American capitalism, who made it with Warren Harding's fourth cousin's third wife, why Marx failed, how Freud blew it, why Trotsky was like Kafka and Kafka like Chaplin and Chaplin like, well, Trotsky, dropped hints about allegories, keys to, bombshells to come, and loved most of all to pronounce definitively, beginning "the poet is," "poetry must," "America means," "Europe was," "money today," "the Jewish poet in America should," etc.

When Delmore Schwartz was in his twenties he disproved that Christian stuff about the way up being the way down. The way up was the way up. If one had a grand purpose, details fell into place. Talk turned into lectures, lectures into articles, articles into books; chance metaphors became profound poems, anecdotes became stories, novels, Broadway plays, film scripts that meant mountains of money, a plenitude of gorgeous women, a permanent place on magazine mastheads, distinguished academic faculties, enshrinement in history books and literary pantheons. The presiding Elijahs—Eliot, Pound, Stevens, Williams—were anxious to cast their respective mantles: the obviously eligible Elisha was Delmore Schwartz. Before he was twenty-five he felt those mantles on his shoulders. Could all this be happening to a nice New York uptown Jewish boy? What would be left for an encore? The wheel of fortune had an old trick play of raising high those consigned to the deepest pit.

On February 1, 1938, poised for the publication of *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities,* he confesses to James Laughlin, his champion and publisher, that praise and bounty "are accumulating to the point where I am going to be terrified."

> It can't last. I can't be being praised for the right reasons by so many people, it is much too soon, and it is taking my mind away from working. I hope that it does not make you expect me to progress in a straight line. . . .

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The reviews of *Dreams* came in, the letters, the congratulations, all but unanimous in their celebration of Delmore Schwartz as the Literary Establishment's new wearer of bays, its chosen Yank at Oxford, Jew at Harvard, *wunderkind*-at-large. He shared his success well with a younger Saul Bellow, a younger Isaac Rosenfeld.

For the next ten years Schwartz feared, and fed, expectations. Here were Eliot, Pound, Stevens, Williams, Tate, Richards, Blackmur, Ransom, Auden, Warren, Rahv, Mark Van Doren, Louis MacNeice, and an intellectual cast of hundreds lined up on his side—and yet: he didn't have tenure at Harvard or Princeton; he didn't have a lifetime contract from Louis B. Mayer; he didn't have a cool million; he hadn't yet been swarmed over by those dreamed-of beautiful, adoring, attentive women.

What wasn't signed and sealed was obviously transitory, or worse, a delusion. Schwartz wanted treaties, blood covenants, mutual aid pacts to codify the irreversible. He behaved sometimes like a very small nation, with chosen envoys, pouch-carriers, trial-balloon launchers. But he could not coerce the calendar or stare down the moon. Acclaim for *The World is a Wedding* in 1948 didn't fake him out. Delmore Schwartz was a hare among tortoises abounding: Bellow, his protégé, silently lapped him, and, more important, kept on writing. And then there was Robert Lowell, and John Berryman, and Randall Jarrell.

Ten years later he was the loneliest of the left-behind runners, with the devil of bad luck dragging after him. Like a faded movie star, he had his clippings. Soon he was dependent on academic and publishing handouts, and too depressed to care. Gone were the days when Delmore Schwartz inhaled theory and breathed out explanation. His talk alone should have produced huge books titled *Lumen* or *Lex* or *Gnomon*. What happened to the young poet on Olympus to turn him into just one of the boys from Syracuse?

This is the question James Atlas, in his biography, *Delmore Schwartz: The Life of an American Poet,* sets out to answer. But Delmore Schwartz's bad luck, alas, continues after death. Atlas has dug through manuscripts and notebooks and little scraps of paper, talked to almost everyone Schwartz was connected with, seems to admire Schwartz's poetry and stories, his criticism, his reviews. At times he shows compassion for Schwartz's unfortunate fall. At times. Ultimately, however, in spite of Atlas's admiration for the writing, Schwartz ends up victimized by Atlas's methodology, his frequently lugubrious moralizing, his Heep-humble biographer's gratitude. Biographers at their best are dachshunds burrowing to get at the weasel underground; or fierce guard dogs defending a subject-master from

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critic muggers; or elegant borzois dashing from one to yet another trendy causerie; or, alas, handlicking spaniels adrool at every scrap dropped from a table.

Atlas's method uses a 1957 perspective, Delmore Schwartz committed to Bellevue; that is, "mad." The people who can tell Atlas about Schwartz are, on the whole, the established, the successful, the rational, the reliable; that is, the sane. Atlas constructs a methodological Either/Or: *mad* Schwartz/*sane* everybody else (including Atlas). While writing Delmore Schwartz's biography, Atlas becomes, in effect, the guard dog of the sane, forever explaining, defending, exonerating people like Harry Levin and Saul Bellow and Meyer Schapiro and Hilton Kramer who, with Atlas for a defender, don't need an accuser.

Take the Schwartz-Levin relationship as an example of Atlas's Either/Or at work. Schwartz, like Levin, was at Harvard, but Schwartz, unlike Levin, didn't get tenure. The two fell out. Atlas, as he does so frequently throughout the book, turns to the Seven Deadly Sins for explanation: "Delmore's jealousy was one direct cause of his break with Levin." Well—O.K. Then Cornelia Walcott's mattress catches fire, she and Gertrude Buckman (Schwartz's first wife) drag it outside into the snow where it leaves an indentation Levin "jovially"—so says Atlas—refers to as "Delmore's grave." Now, Harry Levin and "jovially" aren't an inevitable connection (no more than, say, snow indentations and a "friend's" grave); thus we assume Levin is the source for most of this episode. Atlas's scenario goes on: Levin's jovial quip so upset Schwartz "he never spoke to Levin again, and began attacking him in letters to Laughlin." Worse, Schwartz tried to get even with Levin: "Fabricated stories about the rival were soon added to Delmore's comic repertoire."

No perfectly honorable biographer's hedge such as "according to Levin," or "Levin told me" appears; no underlining of a simple fact, that this is a 1970s version of a 1942 event provided by an interested party. Since Levin is sane and Schwartz was eventually "mad" the Either/Or states that Levin's story must not be qualified in any way. Did Delmore Schwartz in 1942 categorize Harry Levin as "his rival"? And is Atlas as a researcher able to authenticate that all of the stoires he mentions were indeed "fabricated"? A scholar writing about even that most mythic hysteric, the boy who cried "Wolf," would know his subject deserved being believed on at least one occasion.

Of much greater magnitude than the falling-out with Levin was Schwartz's final break with Saul Bellow, his closest friend. This agonizing episode began when Elizabeth Pollett, Schwartz's second

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wife, refused to go with him to Germany (in September, 1957), took off, leaving a note that said Hilton Kramer—once Schwartz's student; in 1957 an editor of *Arts*—"had invited her to review some art shows," and, more important, that she would not see Schwartz again "unless he entered a hospital" for psychiatric treatment.

To Schwartz this was a confession that she had run off to Kramer. Kramer's Chelsea Hotel room would have to be searched. He pounded on Kramer's door; Kramer thought he had a gun, called the hotel clerk. Schwartz had no gun but Kramer was in what Atlas describes as a "state of terror." He slipped out of the hotel, and the city, then telephoned Bellow, "pleading with him to intervene." Bellow simply suggested "he obtain a restraining order." That brought in the police. Schwartz was talked into accompanying the cops to the police station, but, once there, "lost control of himself and began shouting . . . at which point he was handcuffed [Schwartz insisted he was tied in a straitjacket], put in an ambulance, and committed to Bellevue."

Atlas's difficulties begin right here. He uses "committed to" as if it were a synonym for "admitted to." The step-by-step civil liberties safeguards that attend committing someone to a Bellevue escape his attention. He doesn't ever understand Schwartz's agitation. Police can put someone violent, or someone threatening violence, in Bellevue for observation; keeping him there is a separate and quite complex legal matter. Atlas passes over the distinction because he's busy, busy sprinkling absolution:

> No great significance can be attached to Delmore's choice of Bellow as a prominent figure in the conspiracies he perceived, for he had by this time become indiscriminate in his suspicions; the mere fact that Bellow had been involved at all was enough to indict him. Justifiably aggrieved, Bellow was still defending himself a decade later.

Atlas's account of the Bellevue episode starts on p. 330, but not till p. 353, in a throwaway line about Meyer Schapiro, does he mention a specific "suspicion," that Bellow, and Schapiro and others, were "involved in the failure to get [Schwartz] out of Bellevue." He fails to record Schwartz's much more crucial "suspicion," that Bellow had signed him *into* Bellevue.

Now, either Bellow did, or he didn't. He would not lose stature either way. Schwartz's threats against Kramer and Elizabeth were reasons enough to want him cooling somewhere. Yet this is not the issue. Bellevue's admitting records exist. Atlas has looked at some of the Bellevue psychiatric material. Why did he fail to do something so

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basic as examine the Bellevue log on Schwartz? Obviously because of that methodological Either/Or: once Schwartz is tagged "indiscriminate in his suspicions" he is juridically wiped out, dehumanized into a raving Bedlamite.

Bellow's version of the Bellevue episode in *Humboldt's Gift* is, compared to Atlas's, rounded, almost tragic. Bellow's Schwartz character, Von Humboldt Fleisher, remains all-too-human. (Humboldt is a minor character in the novel, lovingly epiphanized in its opening pages but essentially a pale, rumpled "gray stout sick dusty" Failure-foil to Citrine, a comfortable aging Jewish Prince prinked out with the familiar Bellovian earnests of Success—expensive shoes, expensive women friends, highroller relatives, mobster acquaintances, etc.) Twice he accuses Citrine (the book's main character) of misusing "life," of being incapable of separating "life" and "literature." (Schwartz's cry was "This isn't literature, it's my life!") Schwartz rejected any explanation for his Bellevue "imprisonment": the *means*, Bellevue, cancelled out noble *ends*, the total reclamation of Delmore Schwartz.

Ultimately Schwartz zeroed in on his old "pal" Bellow, now his "mighty opposite," as the cause-of-it-all, jealous, treacherous, anxious that Schwartz be packed away in order for Bellow to plagiarize Schwartz's God-knows-what. The perspective of Bellevue made everything ominous: Schwartz had loved *Seize the Day* though its loser hero, Wilhelm, was fitted out with Schwartz eccentricities (some would turn up again as Humboldt's)—his silent, panting laugh, his bear's body, his peculiar ways of driving a car, wearing his suit collar up, drinking gin out of a coffee mug, stretching out to watch television baseball, etc. *Seize the Day* proved Bellow had been observing him; he was being kept in Bellevue because Bellow wanted to observe him further. Bellow's object? More "literature" at the expense of Schwartz's "life."

Atlas doesn't mention, and obviously didn't have access to, Bellow's memoir of Schwartz and Isaac Rosenfeld that he put aside to do *Humboldt's Gift*. The memoir might have spelled out for Atlas just what was at stake in Bellevue. It might, too, have tempered Atlas's literalistic adherence to his thesis that "Schwartz's work, both published and unpublished, is almost wholly autobiographical."

Atlas seems unaware of how Joyce, and Rilke, and Mann, to name the most obvious members of Schwartz's pantheon, had transformed fictional autobiography. Long before Schwartz began to write, the portrait of the artist in the modern world was an established literary form: Stephen Dedalus, Malte Laurids Brigge, Tonio Kröger were

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European archetypes. Schwartz set himself a grand goal, to create a significant American myth out of his own experience and celebrate the new American hero—as poet, as young Jewish intellectual, as twentieth-century west-of-the-Atlantic everyman. Schwartz's language itself was full of echoes from his literary pantheon. Atlas sometimes reads as pure autobiography a paraphrase of Joyce's *Portrait* or the reworking of a line or phrase from Dylan Thomas, Hart Crane, Melville, Blake, Dostoevsky.

After Bellevue, Schwartz's perky literary stance faltered. Early in 1958 he began summing up. His talk at the Library of Congress turned out to be his final word on the American dream:

> Clearly when the future of civilization is no longer assured, a criticism of American life in terms of a contrast between avowed ideals and present actuality cannot be a primary occupation and source of inspiration. For America, not Europe, is now the sanctuary of culture; civilization's very existence depends upon America, upon the actuality of American life, and not the ideals of the American dream.

A much more personal summing up was published a year later, "Seurat's Sunday Afternoon along the Seine," Schwartz's "Dover Beach." He imagined Kafka crying Flaubert's "*Ils sont dans le vrai*" at the "parade and promenade of mild, calm happiness" in Seurat's painting. It wasn't Kafka the writer but Kafka the destroyed man who, like Schwartz, had experienced the ultimate bleakness:

> Without forebears, without marriage, without heirs,
> Yet with a wild longing for forebears, marriage, and heirs. . . .

Schwartz's hyperborean stances had disappeared. On one level the bourgeois scales were simply the scales of life. He weighed himself and found only himself wanting. Bellow and Isaac Rosenfeld before his death had something going in life; Berryman was working on his "Dream Songs" but, much more significantly, Berryman had a son; Lowell had discovered the "rag-and-bone shop of the heart" in *Life Studies* but, on the higher scale, had a family, friendships, a wife.

In 1960 Schwartz published "All Night, All Night," a relentless summing up of his existential state:

> . . . I for my part felt in my heart as one who falls,
> Falls in a parachute, falls endlessly, and feels the vast
> Draft of the abyss sucking him down and down,
> An endlessly helplessly falling and appalled clown

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that last line the more pathetic for its echo of Eliot's

> The notion of some infinitely gentle
> Infinitely suffering thing.

Those last years fall into silence and shadow. Atlas has tried to fill in the narrative, but once again both his methodology and his respect for a literary hierarchy get in his way. Schwartz didn't write much after 1961, so there was less material, less "autobiography," to draw on; again, those witnesses who had served Atlas's researches for the 1940s and 1950s knew very little about Schwartz's life in the 1960s. Not that Atlas ever abandons their point of view: "Ashamed of his condition, Delmore deliberately chose to avoid his friends, preferring to take up with women half his age and people who didn't know him in his celebrated youth." Then there's a curiously sexist and generally deprecating attitude toward those young women. Surely an interview with one of those young people who sat as a comitatus over Schwartz's body would have revealed a fact or two Atlas could pass along with taste and consideration of the individual's present privacy?

Similarly, Atlas refers to Schwartz's rambling spiels at parties and in bars as if incoherence, too, were not the stuff of biography. But what particular passages from *Finnegans Wake*, for example, did Schwartz recite, and gloss—the stage Irishman *shtik*, the Shem-Shaun "battle," the lament of "I done me best when I was let," "How small it's all!" or Joyce's final pronouncement on himself, "Loonely in me loneness"? Even at his most depressed and despairing, Schwartz evidently could wake students to literature as a cry in the streets, or make people see Syracuse was indeed a plausible setting for an American *Ulysses*.

In the end, of course, one must be grateful for even so flawed a work as *Delmore Schwartz*. Atlas's labor must be lauded, for he did assemble an enormous amount of material. He has also resisted that romantic temptation to lump Schwartz's fate with Roethke's, Jarrell's, Berryman's, Sylvia Plath's, Anne Sexton's as proof that America destroys its young, that the pressure to succeed kills off the gifted, the beautiful, the promising. What was said when Schwartz was at his best, and flourishing, still holds true: "You love Delmore, but you can die from him." He was difficult, at times, impossible. Some of Schwartz's friends who continued to love him preferred not to "die from him." To these people—including Bellow, John Berryman and Robert Lowell—he was an image forever fixed in the early 1940s, thoughtful, handsome, owlishly serious, wickedly funny, hopelessly highbrow, hopelessly lowbrow, a boy king of the castle done in by invisible trolls.

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For such a fall nobody is to blame, not capitalism, not the Horatio Alger fix, not the Jewish father, not even the Jewish mother. Not even Delmore Schwartz himself. His life becomes an American myth. Nobody will ever explain it fully. It stands as it was, and carries no consolation.

JACK LUDWIG

PHILOSOPHY AT HARVARD

THE RISE OF AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY. By Bruce Kuklick. Yale University Press. $17.95.

Wir wissen noch nicht, wie
philosophische Texte zu
interpretieren sind.
Dieter Henrich

Historians of philosophy now tend to treat the doctrines they describe in abstraction from any contexts save those provided by anterior doctrine, so that the succession of speculations and conjectures, of arguments and refutations, has the shape of a sustained conversation among contemporaries. Practising philosophers themselves address their predecessors as distant, somewhat retarded, if brilliant, colleagues, the accident of whose historical location is irrelevant to the content of their utterances, and Plato, Descartes, and Professor X of Pittsburgh are all invoked in the same disarmingly

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egalitarian fashion. This casually ahistorical attitude toward their history inescapably extends to themselves, as though philosophy were engaged in outside of time by pure disinterested intelligences; and to a degree the assumed timelessness of their subject influences the *In-der-Welt-sein* of philosophers themselves, who have evolved a form of life appropriate to those with no pertinent biographies. Now it is true that philosophy in the twentieth century has undergone a sequence of purifications and reductions, and has earned, or at least won, a kind of autonomy, enabling philosophers as philosophers to ignore mere science on the one side, and mere life on the other. When this internal purgation is connected, as it appears to be, with the institutional life of philosophy, the suspicion may dawn that there is a deeper historical causality to be found. For we live in our histories much as we do in our bodies, and the current mood of existential detachment may express but an historical moment: purity is content of sorts.

Something like this is the implicit thesis of Professor Kuklick's book. Gibbonian in scale and spirit, explaining the decline and fall of a certain kind of philosophical hero through the triumph of philosophical professionalism. At the end of the period (1860 to 1930) he surveys, the philosopher, who in the nineteenth century had been an intellectual force in American life, had shrunk into an academic personality, employing his energies, like academics everywhere, "in administration, in committee work, in placing graduate students, in organizing conferences, and in running the journals." And, one may add, using the professional catchphrase, "doing philosophy," i.e., filling those journals with competent, technical, responsible and predictable papers, addressed to a pretty standard set of issues dominated by philosophical logic and linguistic analysis, of interest only to other specialists: the literary correlative of Normal Philosophy. There are no philosophical amateurs in either sense of the term, whereas at the beginning of the period there would have been nothing else, for everyone in cultivated society, especially in New England, had some belief in the importance of philosophy, and those who thought of themselves as philosophers addressed just those issues of belief and value which arose at the center of life. Professionalism, by contrast, consists in each philosopher's aiming to be a philosopher's philosopher, with the only meaningful reward the esteem of peers. Emerson, who was everyone's philosopher, gives way to Clarence Irving Lewis, an austere and colorless man, who became the philosopher's exemplar of what philosophers should be.

The Rise of American Philosophy is a diachronic portrait of the philosophy department—"The Department"—at Harvard, ap-

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proached as a superordinate entity with a virtual life and mission of its own, distinguishable from the lives and missions of its main chairholders over those seventy years. It is this institutional reference which makes the book unusual and probably unique. The Department is taken as considerably more than a matrix for the fifteen philosophers whose thought is depicted here, and whose lives were affected by The Department, either because it elevated them to the rank of sovereign princes, or cast them into the outer darkness where their work and character were blasted by this maximal repudiation. Some of the most interesting chapters concern these *ratés*, gifted and ambitious men who for whatever reason were not taken on and whose writing *in consequence* petered out into eccentricity or vulgarity or portentousness: Frank Abbot, Chauncy Wright, James Fisk, figures treated here with dignity and authority, though there would be scant reason to summon them from the shadows as thinkers of transhistorical merit. Yet it is not these portraits, or those of the successful ones—and The Department housed every major American philosopher in this period except one—which gives this book its singular strength and interest. For these individuals could be covered simply as part of American Philosophy, of which there are many routine histories. What fascinates us throughout is The Department as a historical engine, interchanging energies with the wider social environment, whether servicing through reassurances the genteel religious requirements of the Bostonian of 1860, or, by 1930, stamping into professional form and exporting to departments framed in its image the country round, the clever graduate students drawn almost tropismatically to its light. Thus we learn how The Department responded to the crisis of Darwinism; how it overcame the shock of losing the philosophical masters of its Golden Age; how it established a creditable Silver Age with thinkers like Perry, Whitehead, and Hocking; how it stood with World War I in a stance of ludicrous patriotism; how it showed its moral babbittry in coping with Jews and women. At times history gives way to gossip, but one must in the end simply express admiration for the imaginativeness and detail of Professor Kuklick's project, for his archival resourcefulness, and for the lucidity of his expository powers. The question his book raises, however, is whether, once due credit is given for his having organized his history around what was unquestionably the most important philosophy department in America at that time, we can indeed connect in any interesting way the life of The Department with the thought of its resident members. For only this possibility justifies writing institutional history at this level.

I think it largely true that the major philosophy departments

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achieve a corporate persona, with their members exhibiting a community of philosophical taste and even a philosophical style. This is true of Columbia and Stanford, of Princeton and Cornell, and certainly it is and was true of The Department—though it sheltered philosophers as exotic as Santayana and as deviant as Whitehead, and personalities as skewed as Henry Sheffer's, in the period under survey. It is also true that philosophical work suffers when conducted outside the constraints of clarity and rigor that departmental colleagues and students demand: it is arguable that even Charles Pierce's striking philosophy would have been less idiopathic had he been more employable and less a departmental outcast. There is certainly a sociology of philosophy, which is a field hardly immune to fads and glamours, and to shared strange idiosyncracies. Still, the transformation of the philosophical personality can be matched, one feels, by transformations in the historical, the scientific, and the critical personality, partly in consequence of changes in society felt all across the frontiers of the intellect, and partly in consequence of the rise of the modern university. Meanwhile the impulse to the *sort* of philosophy which became professionalized was only reenforced by departmental considerations: its sources lay elsewhere. Professional philosophy *reached* Harvard, from England and from the Continent, but The Department was only one of the centers in which it was advanced: and though it doubtless underwent modification because of local traditions—Quine's thought is clearly an aftershot of Pragmatism—what was modified came from without. I would not dare to insist against Marxists and sociologists of knowledge generally that the shape of philosophical content is not reflective of deep social structures. I would only insist that no one knows what these structures are or how the laws of transformation work. And I am at the same time certain that only a deflected absurd chauvinism would pretend that they are to be identified with the deep structure of The Department as a social entity.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

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LETTERS

EDITORS:

My late husband, Ignazio Silone, bequeathed his archive and correspondence to me with the understanding that I make them "available to future scholars." I have decided to publish the archive in biographical form, probably in several volumes.

For this immense task I shall need the help of all friends, anyone and everyone who knew Silone before I met him (which was in December 1941), or who knew him since but in circumstances or places other than Rome, and would be so kind as to let me have their reminiscences of him; also of anyone possessing letters from him who would not mind sending me photostat copies; also of anyone possessing, or knowing how to find, articles, etc., by him or concerning him—in any language. Given the chaotic situation of the Italian post for the last thirteen years, it would be better to register. If no acknowledgement from me is received, it means the letter has not reached me.

I need not say how grateful I should be for any help of this kind.

Yours, etc.

DARINA SILONE
Casella Postale
7196 Nomentano,
00161 Rome, ITALY

EDITORS:

In my interview in *Partisan Review*, No. 3, 1979, in an aside, I described some poets arguing years ago over their pecking order, and I named Robert Penn Warren as present. My friend Stanley Kunitz has sternly reminded me that it was not Warren but Allen Tate; and that the rivalry was forced on the other poets by Robert Lowell. To Robert Penn Warren, my deepest apologies for my slip, and to your readers too.

I saw the rough draft of the interview only a few days before its press deadline, and in my hasty efforts to focus and revise an on top of the head interview, unaccountably overlooked my slip, which I regret for several reasons, but especially for libeling so honorable a man as Robert Penn Warren.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL

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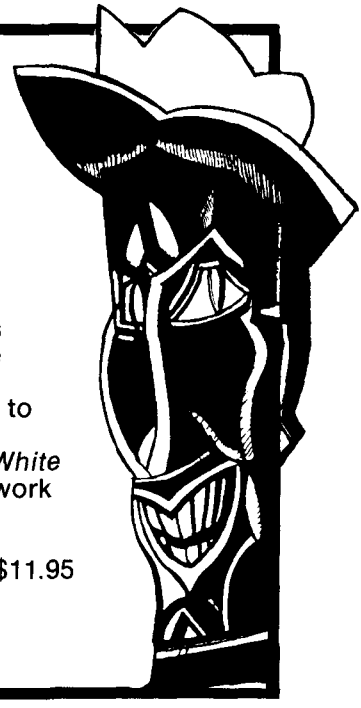

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INDEX TO VOLUME XLVI

ABRAMS, M.H.: How to Do Things with Texts, IV, 566
AGENA, Kay: (br) The Innerworld of the Outerworld of the Innerworld, Nonsense and Happiness by Peter Handke, I, 126
ALTER, Robert: (br) The Professor of Desire by Phillip Roth, III, 478
ARLOW, Jacob: Psychoanalysis Today, IV, 501
ARROW, Kenneth J.: (br) The Twilight of Capitalism by Michael Harrington; Economists at Bay by Robert Lekachman; The Unseen Revolution by Peter Drucker, I, 113
ASTOR, Susan: Urbanization, (poem), III, 426
ATLAS, James: (br) Players by Don DeLillo, III, 482
BAUMBACH, Jonathan: Letter from Seattle, II, 275
BERLIN, Isaiah: Nationalism: Past Neglect and Present Power, III, 337
BERMAN, Marshall: Baudelaire: Modernism in the Streets, II, 205
BERTOLINO, James: The Alien, (poem), II, 256
BIRNBAUM, Norman: Eurocommunism Symposium, I, 9; A New Politics for the 80s?, IV, 559
BOTSTEIN, Leon: German Terrorism from Afar, II, 188; Reply to Martin Jay's letter to editors, (letter), II, 313
BROMIGE, David: My Career, (poem), III, 423
BROOKS, Peter: Death Of/As Metaphor, III, 438
BROWN, Clarence: (br) Nabokov: His Life in Part by Andrew Field, I, 143
BUMPUS, Jerry: (br) Sergeant Getúlio by João Ubaldo Ribeiro; Captain Pantoja by Mario Vargas Llosa, IV, 634
CAMIER, Jamé-Maçeo: Another Life; After Braille, (poems), IV, 602
CHAMETZKY, Jules: (br) On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland Between the Two Wars by Celia S. Heller, II, 298
COLEMAN, Wanda: Men Lips; At Vital Statistics; Lessons; Queen of Sinking Sand; Jerry 1967, (poems), IV, 597
CORN, Alfred: Gloze, (poem), III, 430
COTT, Jonathan: Dew, (poem), II, 257
DANTO, Arthur C.: (br) The Rise of American Philosophy by Bruce Kuklick, IV, 643
DIAMONSTEIN, Barbaralee: Inside New York's Art World: An Interview with Robert Motherwell, III, 376
DICKSTEIN, Morris: Remembering F.W. Dupee, III, 433
DISCH, Tom: What It Was Like; A Concise History of Music, (poems), I, 102.
ELLIOTT, Bill: Letter to my Father-in-law I, (poem), II, 252
EPSTEIN, Leslie: A Decision for the Judenrat, (story), I, 43
FAGAN, Robert: Christina Stead, II, 262
FENTON, Elizabeth: The Days After New Year; Saturn Song, (poems), III, 419
FIFER, Ken: April 4, (poem), II, 261
FOX-GENOVESE, Elizabeth: The Ambiguities of Female Identity: A Reading of the Novels of Margaret Drabble, II, 234
FRIED, Philip: Unwatched Birds, (poem), III, 427
GILBERT, Celia: The Book Of Revelations, (poem), III, 428
GILMAN, Richard: Reflections on Decadence, II, 175
GLASSER, Carole: You Were Her, (poem), III, 422
GRAVER, Lawrence: (br) The Left-handed Woman by Peter Handke, III, 457
GREVE, Ludwig: Hannah Arendt, (poem), II, 317
HACKER, Marilyn: Adult Entertainment, (poem), III, 412
HADAS, Rachel: Hill, (poem), I, 104
HALL, Steven: The Wooden Sky; A Valentine, (poems), II, 257
HAUPTMAN, Ira: (br) The Zodiac

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by James Dickey, III, 470
HOGGARD, James: A Gift from the Scorched Moon, (story), II, 223
HOWE, Irving: George Eliot and the Jews, III, 359
KOCH, Kenneth: Reflections on Morocco, I, 75
KOVEL, Joel: Psychoanalysis Today, IV, 501
KRAUSS, Rosalind: (br) Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare by Octavio Paz, IV, 615
KRIEGER, Leonard: (br) Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South by Ira Berlin; The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823 by David Brion Davis; Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery by Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman; Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made by Eugene D. Genovese, I, 152
LAQUEUR, Walter: Euro-communism Symposium, I, 9
LEHMAN, David: The Last Laugh, (poem), I, 104
LOEWENBERG, Peter: (br) Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture by Peter Gay; A Confidential Matter: The Letters of Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, 1931-1935, III, 461
LOUTHAN, Robert: Provisions in a Will; The Weather Here, (poems), II, 251
LUDWIG, Jack: (br) Delmore Schwartz: The Life of an American Poet By James Atlas, IV, 636
LUHRMANN, Tom: Riverside, (poem), II, 255
MALINOWITZ, Michael: Clouds, (poem), I, 103
MARCUS, Steven: Psychoanalysis Today, IV, 501
MARTIN, Jay: Composure and Decomposition: Three Pieces on the Fiction Collective, II, 280
MATHEWSON, Rufus: (br) The II, 310
MATHEWSON, Rufus: (br) The Gentle Barbarian: The Life and Work of Turgenev by V.S. Pritchett, I, 133
McNEILL, Anthony: Mountain/3; Mountain/5; Mountain/10, (poems), IV, 589
MERKIN, Daphne: (br) Detour by Michael Brodsky, III, 453
MITSCHERLICH-NIELSEN, M.: Psychoanalysis and Female Sexuality, I, 61
NADEL, Alan: To March, (poem), II, 256; To October, (poem), III, 429
OZAKI, Hōsai: Free Verse Haiku from Big Sky, (poem), I, 92
OZICK, Cynthia: Levitation, (story), III, 391
PITTS, George: There We Held Duet and Duel, (poem), IV, 604
POLCOVAR, Carol: Drought, (poem), II, 260
RECTOR, Liam: Where You Get Off, (poem), II, 249
RIEFF, David: (br) The Life of the Automobile by Ilya Ehrenburg, II, 302
ROBSON, W.W.: (br) Evelyn Waugh: A Biography by Christopher Sykes, I, 138
SCHMITZ, Neil: (br) The Dead Father; Guilty Pleasures; Great Days by Donald Barthelme, II, 306; (br) Melville by Edwin Haviland Miller; Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge, A Speculative Reading of Faulkner by John T. Irwin, III, 445
SENNETT, Richard: What Tocqueville Feared, III, 406
SHATTUCK, Roger: (br) The Proust Screenplay by Harold Pinter, IV, 611
SHECHNER, Mark: (br) Journals: Early Fifties, Early Sixties by Allen Ginsberg; As Ever: The Collected Correspondence of Allen Ginsberg and Neal Cassady; Mind Breaths: Poems 1972-1977 by Allen Ginsberg, I, 105
SOLLORS, Werner: (br) From the Ghetto: The Fiction of Abraham Cahan by Jules Chametzky, III, 475

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STEAD, Christina: On the Women's Movement, II, 271
STENT, Gunther S.: (br) The Use and Abuse of Biology: An Anthropological Critique of Sociobiology by Marshall Sahlins, IV, 623
STEPHENS, Gary: (br) The Feminization of American Culture by Ann Douglas, IV, 620
TANNER, Tony: Composure and Decomposition: Three Pieces on the Fiction Collective, II, 280
TAVOR, Eve: (br) The Young Hegel by George Lukacs, I, 148
TERRAS, Victor: (br) A Voice from the Chorus by Abram Tertz, IV, 630
THOMAS, Lorenzo: Screen Test, (poem), IV, 593
TOWLE, Tony: Postlude, (poem), II, 258
TYTELL, John: Composure and Decomposition: Three Pieces on the Fiction Collective, II, 280
VOGELSANG, Arthur: The Vein, (poem), II, 259
WALDROP, Keith: How To Tell Distances, (poem), III, 431
WEST, Paul: The Basement of Kilimanjaro, (story), IV, 553
WIDMER, Kingsley: In Praise of Waste: Some Reflections on Contemporary Culture, IV, 542
WRAY, Elizabeth: A Map of Scars, (poem), II, 250

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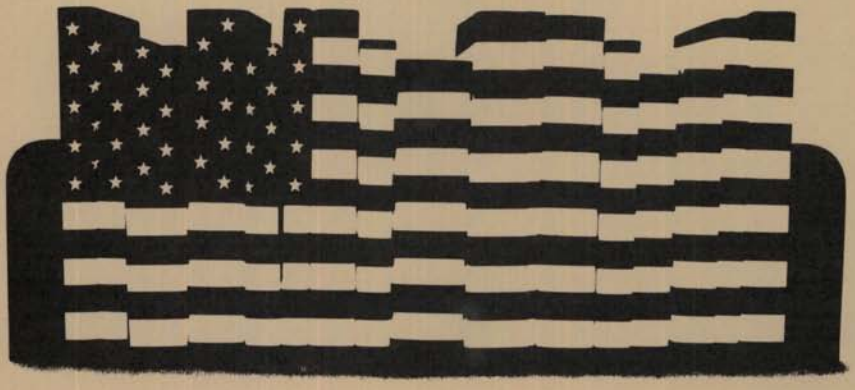

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